Education & Culture Committee #1
March 24, 2025
Discussion

M E M O R A N D U M

March 19, 2025

TO: Education & Culture Committee

FROM: Kristin Cummings, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Update – Arts and Humanities Council

PURPOSE: To receive a briefing and discuss the subject

Expected Attendees:

- Suzan Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer, AHCMC
- Joseph Frandoni, Deputy Director AHCMC
- Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Project Director, Metris Arts Consulting

On March 24th the Education & Culture Committee will receive updates on the development of the AHCMC Cultural Plan.

Updates on the Development of the Cultural Plan

1. **Background**: The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) commissioned their last cultural plan in 2001, titled *Creative Montgomery – A Vision for Arts and Humanities*. (©1-138) Americans for the Arts defines cultural planning as *"a public process in which representatives of a community undertake a comprehensive community assessment and create a plan of implementation for future cultural programming"*. At the time that AHCMC developed their last Cultural Plan, it was primarily to address the growth of arts and humanities organizations in the County, the increased the demand for County funding, and the need for direction for the County arts programs. The 2001 Cultural Plan was developed through Jerry Allen and Associates, and a 35-member Steering Committee. Multiple key findings and recommendations for the direction of arts in Montgomery County were identified in the 2001 Cultural Plan under the following categories:

   - Funding and Sustainability
   - Cultural Facilities
   - Arts and Cultural Education
   - Ethnic Diversity
   - Transportation and Access
   - Marketing and Visibility
   - Heritage and Preservation
   - Support for Individual Artists and Scholars

- Organizational Issues

A full list of the key recommendations and findings from the 2001 Cultural Plan can be found on ©13.

During the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) development of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the department reached out to the AHCMC to request assistance with informing the art affiliated components of the plan within a time frame of approximately 30 days. Recognizing that the Cultural Plan needed updates to ensure connection between current Montgomery County residents and communities with the Arts and Humanities framework, AHCMC leadership began the process of working towards an update of the Cultural Plan. Before bringing on a consulting partner to work towards updating the Plan, AHCMC leadership spent approximately two years preparing for the revision. AHCMC was able to use funds that were deferred during the pandemic to internally prepare for the revision of the Cultural Plan. While the RFP for a consulting partner for this project was originally estimated to be $250,000, AHCMC increased the budget to $350,000 in response to the depth of the work that would need to be completed during the revision of the Plan. The Cultural Plan update is completely self-funded by AHCMC.

2. Pre-Cultural Planning Research: Prior to beginning the official Cultural Planning process, AHCMC engaged in several research endeavors to better understand the current status of arts and culture in the County. The research conducted for this purpose is outlined in Setting the Stage: Planning for a Cultural Plan in Montgomery County, MD ©139-154. Through this research, several areas that have implications for the Cultural Planning process were examined:

a. **Evolving Conditions**: Explored demographic changes in Montgomery County over the past twenty years, and the expanding awareness of intersectionality between the arts and culture sectors and public services. This research also highlighted the need to integrate cultural equity, *"expanding resources for under-represented groups including immigrant populations, removing barriers to participation, and bolstering education and youth development"* into the planning process. The evolving vision, values, and goals of AHCMC over the past several years was also documented.

b. **Setting the Stage and the Economic Impact of the Arts/AHCMC Grantmaking:** Research projects launched by AHCMC focused on the following questions:
   - How do people in Montgomery County define what "arts and culture" means to them?
   - What are the arts and culture assets that are important to people in their lives, and where are they located geographically in the County?
   - What does AHCMC's record of grantmaking indicate about the nature and needs of the County's arts, humanities and cultural organizations?

c. **Pre-Research Indications**: Working with Margie Johnson Reese Partners, a review of background reports and studies, individual and group conversations, and online survey, and community conversations found that Montgomery County residents define art as *"A process of creating or making something of personal or cultural relevance that celebrates or sustained heritage, reflects or challenges ideas/values, investigates innovation, and*

occurs in or reflects spaces that feel familiar and reinforces a feeling of belonging or its absence."

Working with Civic Arts, a cultural planning consultancy, cultural asset mapping was used "as a visual tool to elicit deeper information on using mapping as a visual tool to elicit deeper information about communities' own cultural practices, networks and geographies." It was found that *"local creative gatherings are experientially distinct from the traditional artistic venues, organizations and programs that are more commonly supported by public funding. The three specific insights that emerged from the mapping community data point to a lived experience of creativity and culture within the county that is culturally based, closer to home and focused on the development of connections with local neighbors."*

Imani Drayton, a locally based economist was retained by AHCMC to explore the economic impact of the investments Montgomery County has made into the arts and economic sector through grantmaking. It was found that AHCMC has expanded its service footprint since 2003 and has provided grants to an increasing number of County areas. During the same time, the amount of grant funding for arts organizations in core areas has also increased. A full summary of economic findings can be found on ©150-151.

Through these three research studies, it was found that understanding how arts and culture enters the lived experience of County residents, while grounded in the community itself, should provide the foundation for the Cultural Plan. A full summary of the implications for Montgomery County's Cultural Plan that were determined through this research can be found on ©152.

3. Cultural Plan Development Schedule and Recent Updates: Following the pre-research, AHCMC has enlisted Metris Arts Consulting as partners in the creation of the Cultural Plan. The framing question for the Cultural Planning Process is: *"How can Montgomery County help its residents lead culturally rich lives and best support community-backed priorities through arts, culture, and the humanities?"* As of February 2025, the Cultural Planning process has transitioned from the "Design" phase of the work, where the overall landscape of the project is determined, to the "Discover" phase, where information to inform the creation of the Cultural Plan will be gathered. It is anticipated that the "Discover" phase will go until approximately July 2025. (A list of all five phases for the Cultural Planning process can be found on ©158.)

a. **Design Phase:** The Design phase of the project included:
   - Completing initial research
   - Consulting with Councilmembers to identify community needs and pathways for communication with Montgomery County communities
   - Conducting advisor workshops
   - Identifying cultural plan stakeholders
   - Equity frame stakeholder mapping
   - Identifying community stakeholders who have "high interest" and "low influence"

The "High Interest/Low Influence Stakeholders" are identified groups that could be strongly impacted by the outcomes of the Cultural Plan and have a risk of being unable to shape the plan

through traditional community engagement methods. Groups of High Interest/Low Influence stakeholders that were frequently identified during the advisor workshops can be found on ©160. Once stakeholder analysis was completed, the Cultural Planning team went back to the research and engagement plan that was originally proposed through the RFP, and considered how the plan might be revised to be as robust and equitable as possible.

b. Discover Phase: Based on the research efforts put forth by AHCMC over the past two years, three distinct community-backed values and priorities were identified. These priorities will support the work of the "Discover" phase.:

- **Belonging**: How can arts, culture, and humanities investments and policies respond to Montgomery County's rapid and diverse population growth? Expand access to arts and culture resources for all residents? Advance racial equity?
- **Intersectionality**: How can arts, culture, and the humanities intersect with the work of government and local NGOs in innovative ways to add value to the County's efforts across a variety of areas?
- **Cultural Sector Resiliency**: How can the County's arts and culture investments and policies best support the arts, culture, and humanities sector to strengthen capacity? Address structural gaps? Effectively respond to continued impacts of the pandemic and economic and political instability?

The following objectives for the cultural planning were creating in conjunction with the values and priorities:

- Establish cultural policies for Montgomery County for the next ten years that cohesively advance these community-backed priorities for arts, culture, and humanities
- Provide specific, actionable steps for AHCMC; County agencies; and arts, culture, and humanity organizations
- Align the County's resources across all its agencies
    - Funding
    - Facilities and land
    - Programming, educational activities, and catalytic projects
    - Management of community planning and land development

During the "Discover" Phase of the cultural planning process, the following revised research and engagement methods have been established for work conducting in the next several months:

- **Present to boards and classes**: Fifteen in person and/or live virtual events will be held to share information on the cultural planning process, and to engage various Montgomery County organizations. Additionally, a recorded video with in-person presence from AHCMC staff will be provided to five regional service center citizen advisory boards, a selection of boards and commissions, and boards for AHCMC grantees and community organizations. A full listing of these events can be found on ©165.
- **Cultural Preserves:** Artist Holly Bass is leading this creative community engagement project through a series of artistic pop-ups. These events are intentionally structured to dovetail with events that attract the priority High Interest/Low Influence stakeholder groups.

- **Interviews:** Twelve interviews will be conducted with county agency representatives and other high influence stakeholders to identify new opportunities for intersectional work.
- **Focus Groups**: A series of focus groups with artists and art organizations of various sizes and specializations will be held, in addition to a Youth Town Hall on March 31st in collaboration with Councilmember Fani Gonzalez's office. While the Youth Town Hall will be held in Wheaton, AHCMC will also be connecting with various afterschool programs across the County to collect a comprehensive sample of the youth voices. These events will be particularly valuable for capturing responses to cultural sector resilience questions.
- **Meeting-in-a-Box**: This pre-packaged engagement tool will allow community stakeholders to meet with their local communities to discuss the Cultural Plan. These will be distributed to community groups for the sixteen targeted Low Influence/High Interest stakeholder groups, and another four are available for community use. These kits have also been distributed to community libraries, as well as to the regional service center areas. A full list of the distinct ethnic, affinity, and culturally specific groups identified can be found on ©169.
- **Community Survey:** An online survey will be distributed to broadly capture resident perspectives on the Cultural Plan. Various methods have been implemented to increase inclusive survey participation, including mailing postcards in multiple languages to target residents of the groups identified as priority High/Interest/Low Influence stakeholders. A complete list of the methods that will be utilized to increase participation can be found on ©170.

c. Future Activities: The Cultural Planning process is anticipated to end in February 2026. At this time the final plan will be presented to AHCMC for approval, and then to the County Council and M-NCPPC.

This staff report contains:	**©**
Creative Montgomery- A Vision for Arts and Humanities	©1-138
Setting the Stage: Planning for a Cultural Plan in Montgomery County, MD	©139-154
2/19/25 AHCMC Board Cultural Planning Update	©155-174

Creative Montgomery:

A Vision for the Arts and Humanities in Montgomery County, MD

May 2001

Prepared by

Jerry Allen and Associates
444 Hoover Road
Soquel, CA 95073

for

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County
Montgomery County, MD

Foreword

April 2001

Dear Members of the Arts and Humanities Council:

Jerry Allen and Associates is pleased to transmit "*Creative Montgomery: A Vision for the Arts and Humanities in Montgomery County, MD.*" This plan represents the efforts of more than 200 Montgomery County citizens who worked over a period of 18 months. *Creative Montgomery* contains 48 specific recommendations that will shape the development of the arts and humanities in the county over the next five years. The plan explores new and increased funding sources and proposes new cultural facilities. It emphasizes positive responses to the county's growing ethnic diversity and suggests strategies for enhancing arts education in the public school system and in the community. The plan promotes the integration of the arts and humanities in the county's cultural life and contains new systems of support for individual artists and humanities scholars. *Creative Montgomery* suggests improvements in the public art program and recommends marketing and audience development efforts. It also identifies how planning for cultural facilities can be consistent with solutions to the significant transportation issues facing the county.

Creative Montgomery has been shaped in all of its aspects and has benefited enormously from the many thoughtful meetings of the Cultural Plan Steering Committee. The 35 members, representing all segments of Montgomery County, transformed the cultural plan into a genuine community effort. They served as both a mirror to, and voice for, the people of the county. The result has been a high level of consensus about the cultural path ahead.

The completion of this planning document and its recommendations is not an ending point, but a beginning point. Now the hard work commences. And, in a very real sense, now the fun begins, as the community witnesses the implementation of the plan recommendations. With the energy and activism the consultant team witnessed during our work in Montgomery County, we have little doubt that the plan will be fully realized in the next five years.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

Jerry Allen
Jerry Allen and Associates

Acknowledgements

The development of this plan has been an arduous process, involving scores of meetings, hundreds of interviews with key persons in the community and the active participation of Montgomery County citizens in thoughtful and valuable ways. This plan, like all successful cultural plans, has been "written" by the community, through their input, criticism and consensus.

The planning process, while always moving forward, was marred by the prolonged illness of the lead consultant. In many communities, that might have been fatal to the plan. In Montgomery County, however, the forbearance and the determination of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) kept the process moving ahead and resulted in the implementation of the recommendations as early as last spring. Two people in particular deserve recognition. Theresa Cameron, Executive Director of AHCMC, brought her vision and intelligence to the planning process. She must receive credit for the degree to which this plan zeros in on the essence of the county's cultural needs. She brings an unmatched level of energy and commitment to this community. Fran Abrams coordinated the day-to-day aspects of the plan. It moved with seemingly effortless style. For that, she deserves all the accolades. Her hard work, her unvarying goodwill and her keen insights into the community shaped the plan in many ways. The consultant team is deeply grateful for their assistance and support.

This planning process was blessed with a singularly involved and thoughtful steering committee that sculpted the plan and its process from the very beginning. Never at a loss for new ideas and reflections, these 35 citizens guaranteed that this plan would not represent the consultants' views, but would mirror the community's values and aspirations. Wendy Susswein and Larry Pignone, co-chairs of the Steering Committee, discharged their responsibilities with the enthusiasm and intensity needed to ensure that the process moved with the smoothness that true leadership affords.

We are deeply grateful to the members of the Steering Committee:

Larry Pignone, Executive Director, Montgomery United Way
Wendy Susswein, former President, Arts and Humanities Council
Greg Bayor, Director, Montgomery County Department of Recreation
Honorable Bill Bronrott, Maryland House of Delegates
James L. Brown, Chairman, Department of Art, Montgomery College Rockville Campus
Vincent Brown, Chair, former Commission on the Humanities
Robert Cephas, Office of the President, Montgomery College
Minna Davidson, Legislative Analyst, Office of the County Council
Barbara Duncan, Community Volunteer
Kathy Freshley, Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
Myrna Goldenberg, Director, Paul Peck Humanities Institute at Montgomery College
Ginny Gong, Director, Office of Community Use of Public Facilities
Alice-Marie Gravely, Artist
Patricia Green, former Executive Director, Rockville Chamber of Commerce
Mary Kay Harper, Executive Director, Montgomery County Historical Society

Harriet Henderson, Director, Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries
Denise Kayser, Executive Director, City of Gaithersburg Council for the Arts
Ken Lechter, Board Member, Arts and Humanities Council
Charlie Loehr, Director of Park and Planning, Montgomery County Planning Board
Gesel Mason, Artistic Director, Mason/Rhynes Productions
Ana-Astrid Molina, Executive Director, Coral Cantigas
William Mooney, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County Government
Eliot Pfanstiehl, Executive Director, Strathmore Hall
David Phillips, Director of Corporate Philanthropy, Lockheed Martin Corporation
John Porter, Director, Office of Global Technology, Montgomery County Public Schools
Scott Reilly, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County Government
Gino Renne, President, MCGEO/UFCW Local 1994
Graciela Rivera-Oven, Community Volunteer
William Schlossenberg, Gazette Newspapers
Helen Smith, Coordinator, High School Art, Secondary Theatre, Drama and Dance, Montgomery County Public Schools
Laura Steinberg, Community Volunteer
Sally Sternbach, Community Volunteer
Allan Stevens, President, the Puppet Co.
Linda Sullivan, Arts Management Consultant
Stefan Toepler, Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies
Betty Wisda, Arts Programs Supervisor, City of Rockville

The other members of the consultant team made important contributions to the plan's development. My thanks to Margie Reese, Michael Marsicano, Marete Wester, Steve Friedlander and Jim Smith for their expertise and insights. Thank you, also, to Stefan Toepler and Randy Cohen for their oversight of the two research studies that helped to support the planning process.

Special thanks go to County Executive Doug Duncan and the members of the County Council. It was their foresight that made this planning process possible. Committed to the full cultural maturation of their community, they provided the resources and the impetus to plan for the future of the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. In so doing, they have advanced and accelerated the cause.

In addition, our gratitude goes to the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region, the Pew Charitable Trusts and Americans for the Arts whose financial underwriting helped to make the plan possible. We also thank the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies for their important participation in the preparation of the plan.

Finally, the citizens of Montgomery County must be acknowledged. The consultant team has worked with many communities across the country over the past twenty years. Never have we encountered a more active and involved citizenry. We admit to being astonished that local residents would show up in numbers for community meetings to discuss topics that did not make them angry. Rather, they were simply interested and came to share their ideas. It restores our faith in participatory democracy!

Jerry Allen and Associates
April 2001

The Value of the Arts and Humanities

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities published a report of its findings in 1992 titled *The Value of the Arts*. The Committee drew its conclusions after extensive review of research about the impact of the field on the nation's citizenry and from interviews with experts representing diverse sectors of our society. At its core, the Committee affirmed that the arts and humanities are basic and central mediums of human communication and understanding. They confirmed that knowledge of the arts and humanities is a fundamental aspect of an educated person.

Among their major findings are the roles of the arts and humanities:

In Education

Recent research points to a direct correlation between arts-based learning and enhanced student achievement. The arts and humanities

- Integrate neurological functions, thereby aiding learning and performance in other subject areas;
- Access a variety of human intelligence and foster the use of higher order thinking skills;
- Engage a variety of learning styles;
- Enhance the learning environment;
- Develop a positive emotional response to learning; and
- Stimulate learning and improve overall academic performance.

There is a powerful relationship between knowledge of the arts and humanities and success in scientific endeavors. The link between art and science is creativity itself. Many scientists and other experts feel that tomorrow's scientists and engineers need grounding in the arts and humanities to stimulate their curiosity and creativity to help them perceive the world in new and different ways and to understand the ethical dimensions of their work.

In Civic Life

- American culture incorporates the heritage of many people and thereby provides a unique context for multicultural understanding.
- By giving validity to their culture, the arts and humanities provide new opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals.
- A nation's cultural life is closely related to its freedom. Freedom and artistic expression both require a habit of mind that values open dialogue and an acceptance of criticism. Because the arts and humanities also require interaction between the artist's or scholar's work and an audience, they are essentially participatory, seeking always to create, recreate and renew this open dialogue within a society.

In the Economy

- The arts and humanities are producers of "intellectual capital" which has an enormous monetary value. The creative genius of America is reflected in its music, films, books, records, computer software and countless other works flowing directly from the imagination of its people. These works result from the nurturing of one of America's greatest resources, its creativity.
- An aesthetic dimension to design in products and graphics plays an increasingly important role in helping companies and countries meet their export, sales and marketing objectives.
- The arts and humanities have a direct economic impact, particularly in terms of increased tourism and improved downtown development.
- The arts and humanities can contribute to changing a city's image and promote a sense of community and civic life.
- By contributing to the livability of cities, towns and villages, the arts and humanities help to attract investors.

For Their Own Sake

We cannot forget that the most important value of the arts and humanities is in their very existence and being—art for the sake of art, humanities for the sake of humanities. Artists and humanities scholars have special visions that help us understand ourselves and the society in which we live. They reveal ourselves to ourselves and to the people around us. The arts and humanities constitute our most profound means of communication. Through the visual and performing arts, literature, philosophy and history, we speak to our children and their children about what we aspired to today. They constitute recreation in the Aristotelian sense of "re-creation," the rebuilding of the spiritual side of life. Creative activity is a source of joy.

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Introduction: The Need for a Cultural Plan	5
Planning Context in Montgomery County	7
Vision and Shared Values	23
The Planning Process	25
Findings and Recommendations on Critical Issues	
1. Funding and Sustainability	29
2. Cultural Facilities	45
3. Ethnic Diversity	67
4. Arts and Cultural Education	75
5. The Humanities	89
6 Individual Artists and Scholars	99
7. Public Art	101
8. Marketing and Visibility	105
9. Transportation and Access	111
10. Organizational Issues	113
Initial Implementation Steps	123
Implementation Budget	125
Chart of Implementation Steps	127
Appendices	
A. "The Arts and Humanities in Montgomery County: An Empirical Profile"	
B. Members of the Consultant Team	
C. Individuals Who Participated in Interviews or Focus Groups	
D. "A Comparison of the Montgomery County Arts Council to 9 County Arts Councils"	
E. Overview of Existing Cultural Facilities	

Executive Summary

What Is Cultural Planning?

Cultural planning is the process of assessing the needs of a community in the areas of the arts and humanities. It involves taking an inventory of the community's arts and humanities resources, both public and nonprofit, and identifying ways to build on those resources. Cultural planning means consulting with the citizens of a community to ascertain their cultural values and aspirations. It means assessing the strengths and weaknesses of arts and humanities organizations in the community and exploring ways to capitalize on their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Ultimately, cultural planning is about giving a community a range of choices about how they will express themselves and understand the society of which they are a part.

Why Plan?

Montgomery County has seen dramatic growth in its arts and humanities offerings in recent years. This growth has manifested itself not only in the number of offerings, but in the quality as well, with an increasing number of cultural institutions that are gaining recognition both regionally and nationally. Along with this growth has come an increasing demand on County government funding for the arts and humanities and a greater need to enhance the capacities of the cultural institutions to develop artistically and organizationally. In response to these demands has come the recognition that the path and speed of cultural growth must be assessed and managed and that it is time for Montgomery County to have its first cultural plan.

The Planning Context

Montgomery County is Maryland's most populated jurisdiction, with a population in 2000 of 873,341. County population is projected to grow to more than 975,000 by 2015. The diversity of the population also is increasing. In 2000, according to U.S. Census Bureau reports, the county's population is 15.1% Black and 11.3% Asian, with 11.5% who are Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Montgomery County is home to a wide variety of nonprofit arts and humanities organizations that offer cultural events and educational opportunities to county residents. Many of them are newly created and/or newly discovered through the planning process. Directories published before this plan was undertaken listed about 80-100 cultural organizations in the county. During the planning process, it became evident that there are more than 280 arts and humanities organizations that contribute to the county's cultural life.

In November 1999, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County was selected to be included in a national research project to review local support for the arts and humanities in the county. The research found that

- Half of all currently existing arts and humanities groups in Montgomery County were founded since the mid-1980's.
- Total attendance at programs and events of dedicated arts and humanities groups was close to 1.2 million.
- More than 11,000 volunteers contributed close to 800,000 hours at a value of $11.2 million.
- Total revenues amounted to $25.2 million and total expenditures to $22.5 million in 1998. The total economic impact can be estimated at $40 million.
- The shares of both private giving and public support in the revenue composition of arts and humanities

organizations in Montgomery County appear to be below the national average, based on available national data.

The Planning Process

In June 1999, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) solicited proposals to prepare a cultural plan. The firm of Jerry Allen and Associates of Soquel, CA was selected. Mr. Allen assembled a team of consultants to address issues specific to Montgomery County.

To ensure broad community participation in the planning process, AHCMC appointed a Cultural Plan Steering Committee consisting of 35 representatives of arts and humanities organizations of varying sizes, county and city governments, Montgomery County Public Schools, businesses and community groups, and individual artists and scholars. The Steering Committee identified critical issues to be addressed in the plan, provided feedback to the consultants as they began to draw conclusions, and reviewed and reached agreement on the final recommendations.

Each of the consultants on the team made several visits to Montgomery County. They received community comments at a public forum, conducted numerous interviews and heard from several focus groups. As a result, more than 200 people participated in the planning process.

On March 15, 2000, the *Draft Recommendations for the Cultural Plan for Montgomery County* were presented to the Arts and Humanities Council. This document contained more than 50 recommendations related to the future of the arts and humanities in the county along with a matrix of costs associated with implementation. The *Draft* was presented to the County Executive and the County Council. It then was presented to the community along with an invitation to participate in a series of six community forums to solicit reaction to and comments on the *Draft* recommendations. Extensive media coverage of the *Draft* resulted in more comments being sent by mail and e-mail.

Critical Issues

At their first meeting, the Steering Committee identified and prioritized issues of concern that would become the focus of the plan. They identified eight critical issues:

1) Funding and sustainability
2) Cultural facilities
3) Arts and cultural education
4) Ethnic diversity
5) Transportation and access
6) Marketing and visibility
7) Heritage and preservation
8) Support for individual artists and humanities scholars

Values Guiding the Planning Process

At a later meeting, the Steering Committee put into words the values they had heard throughout the process that they felt were most important to the plan. They agreed that we value

- A vibrant arts and humanities presence visibly woven into the fabric of our everyday lives.
- An inclusive community with opportunities for all to meet their potential, to understand others, and to express themselves creatively.
- Our diversity and the sharing of that diversity.
- Creativity as an integral part of everyday living.
- An environment where creative and scholarly excellence can flourish.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Funding and Sustainability

- Revise grants process to support both arts and humanities.
- Raise level of operating grants for arts and humanities organizations.
- Explore ways to encourage corporate and individual giving.

Cultural Facilities

- Continue annual funding of capital grants and enhance accountability.
- Build a mid-sized theater and a visual arts exhibition facility.
- Create incubator spaces for emerging arts and humanities groups.
- Create incentives for private developers to build cultural venues as part of their developments.

Arts and Cultural Education

- Develop five-year plan for arts education in the schools and in the community.
- Restore the school system's arts staff coordinators.
- Organize an arts education advocacy effort.

Ethnic Diversity

- Promote the role and visibility of culturally specific organizations.
- Award incentive grant funds to develop relationships with culturally specific organizations.
- Work with cultural institutions to implement a commitment to diversity.

Transportation and Access

- Link cultural venue sites to major transportation systems and parking.

Marketing and Visibility

- Develop a database of emerging and culturally specific artists, scholars, and arts and humanities groups.
- Seek funding for a major arts and humanities marketing campaign.
- Promote cultural tourism effort with Conference and Visitors Bureau.

Heritage and Preservation

- Plan for a county Museum of History and Culture.
- Preserve local historic sites.

Support for Individual Artists and Scholars

- Develop spaces to support work of artists and humanities scholars.
- Increase grant amounts to artists and humanities scholars.

Organizational Issues

- Develop "core values" statement for AHCMC.
- Diversify board and staff of AHCMC.
- Align AHCMC programs to county economic development efforts.
- Hire Arts Coordinator in Health & Human Services Department.

Implementation

The implementation of this plan will involve the support and approval of numerous organizations and individuals in Montgomery County – from the arts and humanities groups to corporate, foundation and individual patrons to the public school system to the County Council and Executive. Each has an important role to play in realizing the cultural vision that has been articulated.

Introduction: The Need for a Cultural Plan

What Is Cultural Planning?

Cultural planning is the process of assessing the needs of a community in the area of the arts and humanities. Cultural planning means

- Taking an inventory of the community's arts and humanities resources, both public and nonprofit, and identifying ways to build on those resources;
- Consulting with the citizens of a community to ascertain their cultural values and aspirations;
- Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of cultural organizations in the community and exploring ways to capitalize on their strengths and minimize their weaknesses;
- Finding new or untapped financial resources to support the arts and humanities;
- Evaluating the cultural infrastructure, that is, exhibition and performance venues that support growth of arts and humanities organizations;
- Reviewing local public art programs and urban design plans and strategies to enhance the aesthetic quality of public spaces;
- Determining how to create support systems for local artists and humanities scholars to recognize them as resources critical to the community; and
- Developing creative marketing and thoughtful arts and cultural education programs to expand current audiences and grow future consumers.

Ultimately, cultural planning is about giving a community a range of choices about how they will express themselves and understand the society of which they are a part.

Why Plan?

Montgomery County has seen dramatic growth in its arts and humanities offerings in recent years. This growth has manifested itself not only in the number of offerings, but in the quality as well, with an increasing number of cultural institutions that are gaining recognition both regionally and nationally. Along with this growth has been an increasing demand on County government funding for the arts and humanities and a greater need to enhance the capacities of the cultural institutions to develop artistically and organizationally. With these demands has come the recognition that the path and speed of cultural growth must be assessed and managed and that it is time for Montgomery County to have its first cultural plan.

In the late 1990s, requests to the County government to fund new construction and renovation of cultural facilities rose dramatically. While reacting positively to an apparent burgeoning of the arts and humanities in the county, the County Council expressed concern about the ability of the community to support these requests. Not only were the capital funding requests quite large, but it became clear that still unidentified is

the amount needed to ensure each organization's continued viability as it grows into its new facilities. Based on these concerns, the County Council and Executive requested the Arts and Humanities Council to undertake the preparation of the county's first community cultural plan to examine these and other issues that will impact the future of the arts and humanities in the lives of county residents.

Planning Context in Montgomery County

Population and Demographics

Who Lives in Montgomery County?
Montgomery County is Maryland's most populated jurisdiction. In 1997, Montgomery County had a population of 823,500[1]. U.S. Census data for 2000 shows a population of 873,341, an increase of 15.4% since 1990. During the same period, the State of Maryland's total population grew by 11%. County population is projected to grow to more than 975,000 by 2015. A good example of the pace of population growth in the county is the fact that the population of Germantown was 3,000 in 1970. Today it is more than 65,000.

This population is characterized as follows:

- *Age*
  The percentage of children in the county under 18 jumped by 24.5% between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, the population of children under 18 was 25.3% of the total county population.

  While 2000 census data is not yet available for the population over age 65, projections based on the most recent data available show an increase from 1995 to 2000 of 20.3% in the population over age 65, bringing this segment of the population to 11.7% of the total.[2]

- *Ethnicity*
  2000 census data shows that Montgomery County has a significant minority population. While 64.7% are Caucasian; the population is 15.2% Black; 11.3% Asian; and 8.8% selected other and/or selected two or more races. In addition, 11.5% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin. Origin is separate from what they have reported as their race.

  Available data indicate that the diversity of the population is increasing significantly. The county saw a major increase in its non-white population from 1990 to 2000, including an 85% increase in the Hispanic population and a 60% increase in the Asian population. Montgomery County is now home to 44% of Maryland's Hispanic population and nearly 47% of the state's Asian population.[3]

---

[1] 1997 Census Update Survey, Montgomery County Planning Dept, Research and Technology Center, July 1999
[2] Montgomery County Planning Board, COG Round 6.2, U.S. Census, August 2000
[3] U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171) Summary File, Tables PL 1-6

- *Education*
  There is a high level of educational attainment, with 28.5% of the adult population possessing bachelor's degrees and 30.6 % having attained graduate, professional or doctoral degrees. In total, almost 60% of the county's population has college degrees and another 16.4% report some college education.

- *Housing*
  In 1999, the median sale price for a new single family detached home reached an all-time high of $364,195. A new townhouse had a median sale price of $212,217.[4] The median sale prices for existing homes were $243,000 and $139,000 for single-family and townhouse units respectively. The average monthly turnover rent for market rate multifamily apartments also reached an all time high of $928 in April 2000.[5]

  There is very little available affordable housing in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. Montgomery County has an active program to build affordable housing, but it remains in short supply.

Implication for the Cultural Plan: Montgomery County residents fit the traditional profile of arts and humanities program patrons. These individuals are affluent and well educated. While only 36% of households in the county have children, children of affluent and well-educated parents nonetheless represent an important market for arts and humanities groups. Well-proven marketing techniques can be used to attract these audiences. Special outreach could be conducted through the schools in order to attract new audiences through appealing programs specifically designed for school-age children. Finally, programs that reflect the many culturally diverse groups in Montgomery County could appeal to newly arrived populations.

<u>An Active Citizenry</u>
Montgomery County has an active and politically aware populace. Public hearings on local issues routinely draw hundreds of citizens wishing to express their opinions. Although much of Montgomery County is highly urbanized, very little of the county has incorporated into separate municipalities with the exception of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Takoma Park. Even urban areas like Bethesda and Silver Spring are located in unincorporated areas of the county and have never become cities. This is typical in Maryland where counties are the strongest form of local government and local municipalities, other than the City of Baltimore, are few and far between.

Implication for the Cultural Plan: Cities are traditionally the providers of funding for the arts and humanities at the local government level. However, most of the citizens of Montgomery County do not reside in incorporated areas. There are few cities, as is typical in Maryland but not in other areas of the country. This means that County government must support services that in other parts of the country are not generally in

[4] Montgomery County Planning Department, Research and Technology Department
[5] Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Rental Vacancy Survey

the purview of counties, such as financial support of cultural institutions and the building of arts facilities.

Regional Identity

Montgomery County is adjacent to the District of Columbia and is 34 miles southwest of Baltimore. The county's major business concentrations occur inside the Capital Beltway and along the I-270 corridor. The fact that the county is immediately adjacent to the nation's capital, abutting the northern boundary of Washington, DC, is both a blessing and a curse for the arts and humanities. On the one hand, DC has provided a stable economic base for the region and is the home of many institutions of national and international stature. On the other hand, the shadow of these institutions has no doubt inhibited the development of indigenous social, cultural and philanthropic institutions in Montgomery County.

Implication for the Cultural Plan: Montgomery County's cultural institutions must find a "niche" that will allow them to thrive without head-to-head competition with the much larger and better funded cultural groups in Washington, DC. This might take the form of specialized artistic products, programs that appeal to families or particular audiences, or programs that take advantage of local history. They also have the advantage of being more accessible to most local residents than DC locations.

Urban Center for Cultural Life/Transportation

For many years, Montgomery County had been a bedroom community for federal government workers. With the downsizing of the federal government and the growth of new biotech, telecommunications and internet commerce, the county is less dependent on Washington, DC, as the urban center of economic, social and cultural life. Almost 60% of Montgomery County residents work in the county.

Transportation is a very significant issue in the county. Eighty-two percent (82%) of workers drive their automobiles to work and 72.5% of these individuals drive alone. Only 13.2% use public transit or Metro rail. For the last three years, the Washington region has been ranked the second most congested metropolitan region in the country, behind Los Angeles. In 1996, the region also ranked first in the number of hours each person spends sitting in traffic.

Implication for the Cultural Plan: During the planning process, county residents who live beyond the communities that immediately abut DC expressed an unwillingness to travel to DC in the evenings to attend cultural events. Although residents of Bethesda and Silver Spring may find it equally convenient to attend events in DC or in Montgomery County, residents of outlying areas, where population is rapidly growing, are looking for events closer to home. Montgomery County cultural institutions can use these travel distances to advantage in offering cultural events and programs that are easier to reach. Furthermore, new cultural facilities should be located on major transportation corridors, convenient to parking and public transportation.

Economy

Despite federal government downsizing, the Washington area's economy has been expanding steadily. Capital investment is rising, and the region's housing, retail and office markets are among the hottest in the country. The region has seen remarkably low unemployment rates, poverty levels, and crime rates. While the local economy appears to be slowing, mirroring the national economic situation, the outlook remains strong and stable.

Employment patterns:

- Fifty percent (50 %) of the population work for private, for-profit businesses; 26 % work for government; 11% are self-employed; and 13 % work in the nonprofit sector.
- Total employment in Montgomery County in 1995 was 462,490, and is projected to increase to 628,000 by 2015, a growth of 36%. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the employed population work in Montgomery County, with 25% commuting to Washington, DC. There is a high degree of computer literacy: 68 % of households have computers and 63% have internet connections.

1996 Household Income (1997 Census Update Survey)

- Under $15,000 = 4.4%
- $15,000 - 34,999 = 14.6%
- $35,000 - 49,999 =15.3%
- $50,000 - 74,999 = 23%
- $75,000 - 99,999 = 15.1%
- $100,000 and over = 27.3%

- In 1996, the median household income was $66,085. For 2000, median household income is estimated to be $74,280. Montgomery County's median household income is nearly twice that of the nation.
- The Census Update Survey of 1997 shows that the number of persons in Montgomery County living in poverty is only 5.8%, although 8.8% of children under age 18 were reported as living in poverty.

This is not to suggest that there is *no* economic distress in Montgomery County. For example, in 1997, 28,380 elementary and secondary school students (or 23 % of the public school enrollment) were eligible for free and reduced-cost meals.

The Washington region is a "region that is divided – by income, race, job growth, and the type of public investment. The dividing line runs along 16th Street, NW in the District of Columbia, and along I-95 in Maryland and Virginia. For the most part, middle- and upper-income families, substantial public and private investments, and economic expansion are found on the west side of this line, while lower-income families, minorities, and little or no job growth are found on the east side of this divide. Of course,

not every west-end community is affluent, and not every eastern community is struggling. But the trends indicate an east-west fault line."[6]

The Washington metropolitan area has established industries including tele-communications, defense-related businesses and major concentrations of federal, state and local government activities. The growth of new industries in the area has created a distinct identity comparable to the Silicon Valley, in Northern California. The DC area has become an important center for the biotech field, due in no small part to proximity to the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Celera, the Rockville-based corporation that has recently announced completion of the sequencing of the entire 3.2 billion genes contained in the human genome, is an example of this type of enterprise.

According to the *Montgomery Business Gazette*, in 1999 the largest private employers were Marriott International, Adventist Health Care, Giant Food, Verizon, Hughes Network Systems, Lockheed Martin, IBM, Lockheed Martin Corporation, Sodexho Marriott Services, and Holy Cross Health. The Planning Board's Research and Technology Center reports that 26% of the members of the workforce are employed by government entities including County government, Montgomery County Public Schools, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Food and Drug Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as well as federal agencies located outside the county. Eleven percent of workers are self-employed and thirteen percent work in the nonprofit sector.

Implication for the Cultural Plan: The concentration of "new economy" industries in Montgomery County promises a strong, vibrant economy in the region for years to come. It suggests that corporate and personal wealth to support philanthropic causes will be present. On the other hand, experience from around the nation indicates that these new enterprises are in the early stages of their business life cycles and that they are concentrating on business development, rather than civic concerns such as local cultural development. Ways need to be found to involve these corporations and begin to direct their resources to nonprofit arts and humanities events and programs.

The Public Sector

Local Government

Montgomery County was established by a Maryland State Convention in 1776. The county was named after General Richard Montgomery, who never visited the region but was the first American general to die in the Revolutionary War. The County government functioned under the County Commission system until 1948 when voters adopted a charter giving the county home rule and a council-manager form of government. In 1968, voters approved a new charter providing for separate legislative and executive branches

[6] The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, "A Region Divided," 1999, p.2

of government with legislative power vested in an elected council and executive power in an elected county executive. The new charter was fully implemented in 1970 with the November election of an executive and a council.

The County Council is currently composed of nine members, four of whom are nominated and elected by voters from the entire County, and five who are elected by voters in each of the County's five Council member districts. Terms for the County Executive and County Council are four years.

The current County Executive is	Douglas M. Duncan.
The current County Council members are	Philip M. Andrews Derick P. Berlage Nancy Dacek Howard A. Denis Blair G. Ewing Isiah Leggett Marilyn J. Praisner Steven Silverman Michael L. Subin

Unlike many counties in the United States, but typical of Maryland, Montgomery County is mostly composed of unincorporated areas. For this reason, Montgomery County government must provide services to residents in the entire county. Services include such traditional city services as arts and culture. The three larger communities that are incorporated--Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Takoma Park, offer a limited array of city services as well. Other incorporated towns are extremely small and rely on the County government for most services. They include Barnesville, Brookeville, Chevy Chase, Village of Friendship Heights, Garrett Park, Glen Echo, Poolesville, Town of Somerset, Washington Grove and Laytonsville.

Local Agencies

Several public agencies have direct or indirect involvement in the cultural life of the county. Within the County government and directly responsible to the County Executive are the Department of Recreation, the Department of Libraries, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Public Works and Transportation, the Department of Economic Development, and the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families. The Montgomery County Conference and Visitors Bureau, a nonprofit, membership organization, is funded in part by the County government. Also, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a state-chartered, bi-county agency, functions in Montgomery County as the Montgomery County Planning Board. In addition, two cities within the county, Rockville and Gaithersburg, have their own agencies that provide cultural services to their residents.

Department of Recreation
The Department of Recreation provides recreational, social, cultural, and physical programs to the community. The Department's programs include aquatics, camps and playgrounds, classes, community recreation centers, senior adult programs, special events, sports, and teen, adventure and therapeutic recreation. Unlike other jurisdictions, the county's parks are managed by a different agency, the Parks Department of the Montgomery County Planning Board.

The Department of Recreation has an events and arts team with six full-time staff and a budget of $900,000 of which 90% is devoted to the arts. It operates 15 community centers, all of which have an arts component, arts summer camps, arts programs for seniors, as well as arts programs for individual with disabilities.

The Recreation Department also sponsors several festivals each year, including First Night Montgomery and the Ethnic Heritage Program, with expenditures of about $1 million for these events. Increasingly, emphasis has been placed on creating festivals that showcase the many cultures represented by Montgomery County's diverse population. Almost every event sponsored by the Recreation Department has an arts component.

An important role for the Recreation Department is its oversight of the budget of the Arts and Humanities Council and the Public Arts Trust administered by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Budget requests are submitted to the County Executive via the Recreation Department.

Another important function of the Recreation Department is administration of the Cultural Facilities Improvements Grants program. Although part of the County gpvernment's operating budget, this program provides funding to nonprofit arts and humanities organizations for purchase of equipment, building renovations, and construction of new facilities.

Department of Public Libraries
The Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries is one of the most heavily utilized library systems in the nation. In addition to its 21 branch libraries, the Department offers library services at the County Detention Center; bookmobile service; special collections, such as the business collection and the special needs collection; an on-line catalog; and specialized services for specific populations, such as teens.

Additional services are provided by Friends of the Library, a nonprofit organization with chapters at most of the branch libraries. Many of the activities sponsored by the Friends fit directly into what this plan recognizes as humanities activities, including presentations by authors, book reviews and literary discussions.

Department of Public Works and Transportation
The Department of Public Works and Transportation is responsible for the planning and construction of public buildings and roads. Within the department, the Division of

Facilities and Services is specifically concerned with public buildings. Since Strathmore Hall is owned by the County government, the Division of Facilities and Services has become increasingly involved in the cultural environment. The Division is responsible for planning and building the new concert hall that will significantly expand the facilities located on Strathmore Hall's site. In the event that the County chooses to build other needed cultural facilities as described in this plan, this division will be in charge of planning and building those facilities as well.

Department of Health and Human Services
The Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for providing an extensive array of services addressing health and human services needs of Montgomery County's residents. They make use of community resources through contracts with nonprofit service providers. In some instances, these providers are arts organizations who provide programs targeted to client populations. For example, Round House Theatre provides a program that addresses the needs of alcoholic senior citizens. The Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts cooperates in a program to mainstream disabled children.

Department of Economic Development
The Department of Economic Development works to provide an environment supportive to businesses, nonprofits and associations in the county to help retain existing enterprises and attract new ones. It promotes the county as a location with an educated workforce, an excellent and still developing transportation infrastructure, high quality educational resources from elementary through advanced college degrees, and a place where the residents enjoy a high quality of life. The availability of a myriad of cultural activities is an important component of the county's quality of life.

Recognizing the relationship between cultural infrastructure and economic vitality, the Department of Economic Development played a large role in securing the relocation of the American Film Institute to Silver Spring and obtaining capital support for the new location from the County government. The AFI project points the way to not only enhancing the economic vitality of an individual community, but in promoting the cultural development of the region.

Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families
Montgomery County has a large number of privately and publicly funded programs promoting parent education, literacy and job skills training to meet the needs of families in a variety of circumstances. While there are many excellent models, the Collaboration Council's goal is to ensure that parents can find offerings best suited to their circumstances, programs are accountable and of high quality, and stable funding.

The Collaboration Council is authorized by state statute and charged by county resolution to be the catalytic leader in improving results for the county's children by developing an integrated service system. The Council is composed of parents and other advocates for children, individuals, as well as representatives of organizations, public and private

providers of services, the United Way, members of the business and faith communities, government leaders and elected officials.

One of the Collaboration Council's current activities is to provide after-school programs for at-risk youth. In cooperation with this effort, the Arts and Humanities Council has committed its funding for at-risk youth services to fund the inclusion of arts activities in the mix of services to be provided.

Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County (CVB)
The Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County (CVB) is a public/private, organization that is supported by the County's Department of Economic Development, by membership dues, hotel occupancy taxes, state grants and other funding initiatives. Its primary mission is to market, develop and promote tourism in the county. The CVB represents all businesses, small and large that share a common interest in the visitor industry. It distributes materials to visitors and to residents about attractions in the county, including cultural events and historic sites, and promotes the county as an outstanding location for conferences. It operates a web site with tourism information and a Visitor Information Center in Germantown just off of I-270.

Montgomery County Planning Board of the
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
The Montgomery County Planning Board is the local portion of a bi-county agency – the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The Board plans for livable communities by preparing large and small scale plans that provide guidelines for the pattern of future development and by preserving historic resources throughout the county's 323,000 acres. The Planning Board implements plans through its review of development applications and subdivision applications. The Board's research center is a comprehensive source of information, data and research on census figures, land use and demographics. In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission and the staff of the Historic Preservation Office are under the purview of the Planning Board.

The Board has an ad hoc but effective role in the arts. It has been instrumental in negotiating cultural amenities in exchange for increased density as permitted under the optional method of development in some of the county's zoning categories. Amenities have included public art, but most significantly have stimulated the development of new cultural facilities. The BlackRock Center for the Arts was made possible by the Planning Board through negotiations with developers of large-scale commercial projects in Germantown. The new Round House Theatre in downtown Bethesda is being constructed by Chevy Chase Bank in an agreement that allows greater density in its new office headquarters.

Historic preservation functions at the Planning Board include information, research and recommendations regarding historic preservation in the county, regulatory review of proposed changes to historic properties, management of a small grant program for historic preservation of privately-owned properties, and administration of the

Montgomery County property tax credit program that allows 10% of the cost of improvements to historic properties to be deducted from property taxes.

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC)
AHCMC will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 10, but deserves mentioning in the list of agencies that participate in the arts and humanities in the county. AHCMC is established in County Code as the County government's designated local arts agency. In this role, it provides services to arts and humanities organizations and individual artists and scholars in the county. It administers grant funds appropriated by the County government to support the arts and humanities and also re-grants funds received from the Maryland State Arts Council. AHCMC serves as an advocate for the arts and humanities and works to raise awareness of the many and varied cultural resources in the county. An active volunteer board of directors oversees its activities.

City of Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks, Arts Division
The City of Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks includes an Arts Division (AD) that offers a wide variety of services to city residents. AD has a staff of two full-time people and relies on numerous volunteers. A nine-member Cultural Arts Commission appointed by the Mayor and Council of Rockville serves as an advisory board.

AD oversees four city-sponsored performing groups -- the Rockville Civic Ballet, the Rockville Concert Band, the Rockville Community Chorus and the Rockville Regional Youth Orchestra. AD also provides an entertainment series at Courthouse Square Park, Glenview Mansion, and other sites around the city. Since 1978, staff has operated a public arts program funded by a 1%-for-art ordinance. This program has placed 29 art works in new or renovated facilities and parks. In addition, there is a public art component in the city's capital improvements program that currently yields more than $40,000 for public art.

Two significant cultural facilities are owned and operated by the City of Rockville. These are the Glenview Mansion and the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. The mansion is available for social and community events, and is programmed by the AD staff with cultural events and visual art exhibits throughout the year. The theater is heavily utilized by the city-sponsored performing groups, as well as a number of groups that are regarded as resident companies. These include the Rockville Little Theatre, Rockville Musical Theatre, the Victorian Lyric Opera Company and the National Chamber Orchestra. The theater is available for rental to other groups as dates are available.

City of Gaithersburg Cultural Arts Program & Council for the Arts
The City of Gaithersburg cultural arts program includes art in public places, concert series, festivals, special activities and annual events. Visual art exhibitions are provided at the Kentlands Mansion Galleries, the City Hall Gallery, the Activity Center at Bohrer Park, and at the Gaithersburg Cultural Arts Center at the renovated historic barn at the

Kentlands. The City also organizes an annual exhibit at the Maryland House of Delegates in Annapolis.

The Cultural Arts Program also sponsors an Arts in Schools grants program for students enrolled in local schools; collaborates with area institutions such as the Kennedy Center to bring performing artists into the classroom; and arranges performances of national touring companies as well. It sponsors the Gaithersburg Children's Chorus and, in partnership with the Gaithersburg Regional Library, sponsors an annual program for children ages 4-11 offering a series of five performances of a variety of music, dance, theater and cultures from different countries.

In addition, the City presents an International Book Festival, hosts a Community Chorus open to the community, and sponsors an arts festival at the newly-opened cultural center at Kentlands. This center will house the studios of five artists in residence, studio space for visiting artists, space for workshops, slide lectures and gallery space. The upstairs will be home to a 99-seat theater. The City Hall Concert Pavilion is home to a concert series, family theater, Shakespeare in the Park, and other events. The City also has an Art in Public Places Program that develops public art placed throughout the City.

Local Colleges and Universities

The county is home to several institutions of higher learning that contribute to both the arts and the humanities fabric of the community. They include Montgomery College and local branches of the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University.

Montgomery College

Founded in 1946, Montgomery College provides both two-year degree and non-degree programs to more than 20,000 credit students and 15,000 continuing education students. The first campus was located in Takoma Park. The College has grown to three campuses, with Rockville added in 1965, and Germantown in 1975. The college curriculum includes a wide array of subjects in the arts and humanities.

On the Rockville campus, the Robert A. Parilla Performing Arts Center is the best-equipped theater space in the county available for rental to outside groups. It is used approximately one-third of the time for college productions, one-third for programming booked by the college, such as touring companies and nationally or internationally recognized artists, and one-third for rental to community organizations. The majority of these programs are open for attendance by the general community. Several dance companies in the county rely on this space for their performance venues.

The College has three formal, professional galleries that regularly schedule national and international artists, as well as public school and local artists, to exhibit art throughout the year. For more than 20 years, the College also has promoted the exhibition of large-scale outdoor sculpture on its campuses. The College offers a variety of dance, ballet, theatre, Summer Dinner Theatre, opera, symphonic music and recitals each year in its theatres, recital halls and performance spaces.

The Rockville campus also is home to the Paul Peck Humanities Institute, an innovative partnership between Montgomery College and the Smithsonian Institution. Montgomery College and the Smithsonian have created an alliance to enhance teaching and learning of the humanities. The Institute hosts a wide range of scholarly and community-focused activities including an annual faculty seminar led by a Smithsonian scholar-in-residence, museum-based faculty research fellowships, student internships at the Smithsonian, and public lectures and symposia.

University of Maryland Shady Grove Center
The University of Maryland Shady Grove Center is located near Shady Grove Road and Route 28. As a University System of Maryland (USM) facility, the Shady Grove Center provides classroom space for five degree-granting USM institutions including the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). Graduate courses are available in business administration, education, molecular biology and genetics, nursing, professional engineering, and social work. Noncredit professional programs are available in biotechnology, management, and social work. Undergraduate students may apply for dual admission to Montgomery College and the University of Maryland University Center, taking courses at both institutions.

Johns Hopkins University, Montgomery County Center
This local branch of Johns Hopkins University is located near I-270 and Shady Grove Road. This location offers more than 40 part-time graduate professional degrees and certificates, evening and weekend classes, labs, and a full-service library. Four schools are represented on this campus: Arts and Sciences, Professional Studies in Business and Education, Engineering and Public Health. Recently, arrangements have been made that allow students who have successfully completed two years of study at Montgomery College to transfer to this campus to complete a four-year degree. This location also has conference and meeting rooms that are used to host lectures open to the public and that are made available for outside use.

The Cultural Environment

Nonprofit Arts and Humanities Organizations
Montgomery County is home to a wide variety of nonprofit arts and humanities organizations that offer cultural events and educational opportunities to county residents. Many of them are newly created and/or newly discovered through the planning process. Before undertaking this plan, it was commonly believed that there were about 80-100 cultural organizations in the county. During research completed as part of the planning process, it became evident that there are more than 250 nonprofit organizations contributing to the county's cultural life. Research also found that half of the organizations were founded since 1984. Not surprisingly, the larger organizations tend to be the older organizations.

There is a long history of nonprofit organizations established to provide cultural services in the county. Olney Theatre Center, The Writer's Center, Adventure Theatre and Strathmore Hall Arts Center are among those organizations that are more than 25 years old. Nonprofits have flourished in an environment where few cultural services are provided by government entities. An exception is Round House Theatre that began as "Street 70" within the Recreation Department. In keeping with the tradition of non-government involvement in service delivery, Round House Theatre recently underwent a process of privatization that successfully converted the organization into an independent nonprofit. Similarly, there is no history of the Arts and Humanities Council providing services directly to public audiences and this type of service is not contemplated in AHCMC's mission statement.

In November 1999, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for the Arts, was selected to be included in a national research project to review local support of arts and humanities in the county. This report of this research is entitled *The Arts and Humanities in Montgomery County: An Empirical Study.* (See Appendix A for a complete copy of the report.) The study found that

- Half of all currently existing arts and humanities groups in Montgomery County were founded since the mid-1980s.
- Total attendance at programs and events of dedicated arts and humanities groups was close to 1.2 million.
- More than 11,000 volunteers contributed close to 800,000 hours at a value of $11.2 million.
- Volunteer labor constitutes more than half of total labor input of arts and humanities organizations.
- Total revenues amounted to $25.2 million and total expenditures to $22.5 million in 1998. The total economic impact can be estimated at $40 million.
- Earned income constitutes by far the most important source of income representing two-thirds of operating revenues.
- The remaining third of operating revenues in almost equally divided between private donations and public support with the latter being the smaller revenue source.
- 95% of government support goes to the larger organizations.
- The shares of both private giving and public support in the revenue composition of arts and humanities organizations in Montgomery County appear to be below the national average, based on available national data.

The survey findings imply that the arts and humanities community in Montgomery County is still in its formative stage and likely to continue to grow. Limited access to public support, the lack of significant private philanthropy, and the growing need for performance venues raise substantial policy and development issues.

A significant number of nonprofit arts organizations in the county are planning or developing new facilities. These include a Silver Spring location for the American Film Institute (AFI), a state-of-the-art concert hall at Strathmore Hall Arts Center, a children's theatre and center for the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts (BAPA), a new theater space for Round House Theater, expansion of the Olney Theatre Center for the Arts, the construction of the new BlackRock Center for the Arts, Pyramid Atlantic's relocation from Prince George's County to downtown Silver Spring, the renovation of historic Glen Echo Park and the expansion of the Montgomery College campus at Takoma Park to include an arts center.

All this growth and construction suggests that the county's nonprofit arts and humanities sector is experiencing a cultural renaissance. At the same time, many smaller (less than $100,000 in revenues) organizations are still struggling to maintain their programs and enhance them to meet the needs of a diverse community. Several organizations have completed their own demographic and other surveys to help define programs, but there has been no overall comprehensive plan to address the long-term sustainability of cultural organizations and facilities, the value and importance of maintaining the infrastructure of nonprofit cultural groups, and the effect of arts and culture on economic life in the county.

Public Support for Nonprofit Cultural Organizations

The early 1990s were difficult years for the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. Traditional sources of funding for culture, both private and public, were cut back, eliminated, or redirected to other competing needs. Organizations were struggling from a shortage of funds and inadequate facilities to serve their needs and audiences. In response, Montgomery County convened the Task Force on the Future of the Arts in 1995 to determine what was necessary to ensure a sound future for the arts in the county. They examined how to provide the resources arts organizations needed to carry out their various missions. The Task Force recommended

- Combining efforts to obtain resources.
- Increasing community awareness and participation in the arts through more aggressive marketing, publicity, and sales.
- Increasing corporate support for the arts.
- Increasing County government funding for the arts.
- Developing new facilities for the arts.

The Report of the Task Force on the Future of the Arts noted that there had been little support for the arts, both from the corporate sector and from the public sector. It reported organizations relying on earned income for 81% of their revenues. As this plan reports, there still is a very low level of corporate support for cultural organizations in the county. What has changed since 1995 is the commitment of public funding support.

Working together with the then-Arts Council, a group of the larger, well-established arts organizations persuaded the County's elected officials to create a funding stream for "major" arts organizations. These were defined as groups with $100,000 or more in annual revenue. This was an important step in recognizing the County government's responsibility to help support the development of cultural activities for county residents.

Although smaller grants have been made available to organizations with revenues under $100,000, the outcome of the funding system has been that 95% of County government funding has been distributed to about 20 larger organizations. The medium and smaller organizations, relatively unrecognized and only minimally funded in the past, now number more than 280. Thus, while the County government recognized its responsibility to support the nonprofit service providers in the cultural arena, this plan is the first step toward re-structuring the funding system to make it more equitable for groups of all sizes.

At the state level, a primary source for the arts in Montgomery County is the Maryland State Arts Council that distributes funds both to the Arts and Humanities Council and to individual nonprofit organizations. In addition, some organizations have received funding from the Maryland Humanities Council.

At the federal level, funding for the arts and humanities has been available through the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice.

Private Sector Support for Arts and Humanities Organizations

Unprecedented economic growth, fueled by the "new economy," is creating phenomenal wealth and prosperity in the national capital region. The Washington region is at the epicenter of the 21st century's information and technology revolution. The region now boasts over 12,000 high tech companies, replacing the federal government as the largest employment sector. The pharmacological and medical applications of genome research foretell even greater economic prosperity for the region's biotech sector in years to come.

Along with the healthy economy of the region, there is evidence of an impressive increase in corporate citizenship. This is a region of givers. It is estimated that Washington-area individuals, foundations and corporations gave over $6.2 billion to charity in 1998. The adjusted gross income of area taxpayers exceeds the national average. As individuals, Washington-area residents are among the most generous in the country, with a record of giving 46% more than the national average. The region's foundation sector gave more than $771 million in grants in 1999, and that sector is growing rapidly.

However, Maryland is dramatically different from other parts of the nation in nonprofit giving. It ranks 43rd in giving among the 50 states. A recent study showed that Marylanders with incomes under $100,000 give above the national average, but Marylanders with incomes over $100,000 are giving below the national average by

$2,083. Maryland's private giving accounts for only four percent of the state's total nonprofit sector revenue.

Despite this dismal record, there have been some generous family and individual gifts to support the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. The capital campaigns of Olney Theatre and the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts have demonstrated that, with the right project and sophisticated fund-raising, major patrons can be identified and cultivated. Likewise, Paul Peck's underwriting of the Humanities Institute at Montgomery College represents a very significant individual donation to a local organization that should be recognized and emulated.

The annual County Executive's Ball for the Benefit of the Arts and Humanities also raises private dollars to support local cultural organizations. The Ball was begun in 1984 by County Executive Sidney Kramer and his wife Betty Mae, an ardent supporter of the arts. Held each December, it has been continued by every County Executive since and, in election years, serves as the inaugural ball for the Executive. Originally, it benefited a consortium of large arts organizations. Recently, Barbara Duncan, wife of County Executive Doug Duncan, has expanded the group of organizations receiving support to include smaller organizations and humanities groups. Because it is an important opportunity for people in the business and nonprofit communities to socialize with elected officials, attendance at the Ball is always high.

Vision and Shared Values

Every cultural plan arises in the context of a community, with its particular history, cultures, values and aspirations. Such was the case in Montgomery County. Never before has there been an occasion for the County government or its residents to articulate a guiding vision for the future of the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. This plan is guided by a set of values and beliefs developed by the Cultural Plan Steering Committee, a group of 35 individuals representing all sectors of the community – the arts, humanities, business, government, education, philanthropy and neighborhoods. In a very real sense, they spoke for the entire county when they developed these guiding principles. These values and beliefs and vision of the future can serve as a point of departure in cultural activities over the next five years. The recommendations in this plan reflect these basic shared values.

We value

- A vibrant arts and humanities presence visibly woven into the fabric of our everyday lives.
- An inclusive community with opportunities for all to meet their potential, to understand others, and to express themselves creatively.
- Our diversity and the sharing of that diversity.
- The arts and humanities as agents of social change.
- The opportunity to leave a cultural heritage for future generations of Montgomery County citizens.
- Creativity in the arts and humanities as an integral part of everyday living.
- An environment where creative and scholarly excellence can flourish.

We believe

- The arts and humanities have the power to transform the lives of Montgomery County residents.
- The arts and humanities contribute to our civilization – the quality of being and becoming civil.
- Montgomery County is a unique community with a rich and changing history that the arts and humanities can help illuminate.
- Young people who participate in the arts and humanities are strengthened in all aspects of their lives.
- A rich and dynamic cultural environment will enhance our community and each resident's quality of life.
- The arts and humanities can be a catalyst for developing a culture of giving among businesses in Montgomery County.

We envision

- A county recognized nationally for the excellence of its arts and humanities programs.

- A cultural shift that reflects a high value placed on the arts and humanities by all Montgomery County residents.
- Arts and humanities organizations throughout the county being well supported by public and private funding.
- Access to the arts and humanities for all ethnic cultures represented in our diverse community.
- A county where participation in arts and humanities events is a regular habit of all residents and events are available to all residents geographically throughout the county.

The Planning Process

The Planning Consultants

RFP and Selection of Consultant
In June 1999, AHCMC sent requests for proposals to seven consultants both locally and throughout the country for the preparation of a community cultural plan for Montgomery County. Three firms responded to the RFP. A selection committee composed of Board members of the Arts and Humanities Council and representatives of the County Department of Recreation, Office of Planning in the County Executive's Office, and major cultural institutions, read each proposal and conducted interviews with the firms that appeared to be the most qualified. At the conclusion of this process, the firm of Jerry Allen and Associates of Soquel, California was selected to prepare the plan. In September 1999, a contract was signed with Jerry Allen and Associates for the preparation of the community cultural plan for Montgomery County.

Mr. Allen has been involved in the cultural and public art planning fields since 1985. During that time, he has completed major cultural plans for the City and County of Denver and the City of Los Angeles. He also has been associated with other firms in the development of cultural master plans for the Charlotte (NC) Arts and Science Council and the Broward County (FL) Division of Cultural Affairs. Mr. Allen is Director of the Office of Cultural Affairs of San Jose, California. He undertakes only a limited number of consulting assignments. For each consulting assignment, he assembles a team of consultants who are particularly suited for that project.

The RFP clearly stated that this is not to be a plan for the County government or a plan for the Arts and Humanities Council. Rather, it is a plan for the community. The planning process had to be consistent with this idea. One of the reasons stated for selecting Jerry Allen and Associates was their clear understanding of this idea and their proposal for a process that would significantly involve the community.

Consulting Team
The team of consultants Mr. Allen selected for this project reflects cultural issues that had surfaced in the county. He also set aside a portion of his budget for one or more consultants who might be needed as additional issues were identified. The consulting team selected by Mr. Allen was comprised of himself, five other consultants, and two persons responsible for two different research projects that contributed to the plan.

Michael Marsicano from The Foundation for the Carolinas in Charlotte, North Carolina, was selected to oversee the portion of the project dealing with funding and support from both public and private sectors, as well as the projections of future funding needs in the county. *Margie Reese*, formerly the Director of Cultural Affairs for the city of Dallas, was chosen to analyze the scope and effectiveness of existing programs, with a special emphasis on outreach to underserved communities. *Steve Friedlander* of Leonard

Auerbach and Associates, a cultural facilities planning and design firm, was given the role of reviewing existing and planned cultural facilities and providing recommendations regarding future facilities. *Marete Wester* who is with the Alliance for Arts Education/New Jersey, joined the consulting team to examine the issue of arts in education. *James Smith*, a widely-recognized humanities expert, was added to the team to review current humanities offerings in the county and make recommendations on how to strengthen the humanities.

Dr. Stefan Toepler, Associate Research Scientist on the faculty of the Institute for Policy Studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, was responsible for overseeing the research for and writing the report "The Arts and Humanities in Montgomery County: An Empirical Profile." *Randy Cohen*, Vice President for Research and Information at Americans for the Arts in Washington, DC, was responsible for conducting the research for and preparing the report titled "A Comparison of the Montgomery County Arts Council and 9 County Arts Councils." (Detailed information about the consultant team is included in Appendix B.)

Community Input

Steering Committee

To ensure continuing community participation in this planning process, the AHCMC appointed a Cultural Plan Steering Committee. (See list of Steering Committee members in the Acknowledgements on pages iii-iv.) Wendy Susswein, then President of the Arts and Humanities Council, and Larry Pignone, Executive Director of Montgomery United Way, served as co-chairs of the committee. The committee consisted of representatives of arts and humanities organizations of varying sizes, county and city governments, Montgomery County Public Schools, businesses and community groups, and individual artists and scholars. The role of the Steering Committee was to identify critical issues to be addressed in the plan, to provide feedback to the consultants as they gathered data and began to draw conclusions, and to review and reach agreement on the final recommendations.

Critical Issues

At their first meeting, the Steering Committee was lead by Jerry Allen and Margie Reese through a structured exercise to identify and prioritize issues of concern that would become the focus of the plan. They identified eight critical issues:

- Funding and sustainability
- Cultural facilities development
- Arts education and future audiences
- Ethnic diversity
- Transportation and access
- Marketing and visibility
- Heritage and preservation
- Support for individual artists and humanities scholars

The Development of the Plan

Each of the consultants made several trips to Montgomery County. During these visits, they received community comments at a public forum, conducted numerous interviews and heard from several focus groups. These activities resulted in more than 200 people becoming contributors to the plan's content. (A list of the participants is included as Appendix C.)

A public forum on the arts and humanities was held on December 2, 1999 at the Executive Office Building in Rockville. Members of the community were invited to speak to the consultants about issues they believed would affect the future of the arts and humanities in the county. More than 60 people attended and more than 20 people expressed their views at this forum.

The consultants then conducted interviews with local elected officials, government staff, representatives of arts and humanities organizations, and representatives of community- and faith-based groups. Interviews were not limited to those with background or specific knowledge of the arts. The consultants also sought those who could provide a sense of the character of Montgomery County, both its strengths and its weaknesses. An unintended but valuable outcome of the interview process was that the consultants became familiar with the geography of the county and the traffic congestion that impacts the lives of all county residents.

Over the course of the process, the consultants also conducted a series of focus groups to elicit information on specific areas of interest. Focus groups were conducted with business representatives, arts educators, individual artists, large arts organizations, and small and mid-sized emerging arts organizations. In addition to this local information-gathering process, the consultants conducted research on past trends in the county and on best practices in other regions of the country. All of this information was used in the preparation of this plan.

Draft Recommendations for the Cultural Plan

On March 15, 2000, Jerry Allen and Associates presented the *Draft Recommendations for the Cultural Plan for Montgomery County* to the Arts and Humanities Council. This document contained more than 50 recommendations related to the future of the arts and humanities in the county along with a matrix of costs associated with implementing the recommendations. The *Draft* was presented to the County Executive and the County Council.

The *Draft* then was presented to the community along with an invitation to participate in a series of six community forums intended to solicit reaction to and comments on the recommendations. There was considerable attention in the local news media about the *Draft* in general and some of the recommendations in particular that elicited strong

viewpoints. This discussion helped to generate participation in the community forums held during April and May 2000 in Olney, Bethesda, Silver Spring, Germantown, eastern Montgomery County, and Rockville. Also, comments were received by mail and e-mail from interested residents. A compilation of comments received was shared with the Steering Committee who then worked on modifying the recommendations to reflect this input.

Findings and Recommendations on Critical Issues

1. Funding and Sustainability: FINDINGS

Introduction

The system of arts and humanities funding support in Montgomery County comes from earned income and a mix of private and public resources. On average, foundations, corporations and individuals each contribute around 5% of the total operating revenues of cultural institutions. Local government support is in the same range, but it tends to be concentrated very heavily toward the largest arts and humanities nonprofits.

Public Sector Support

As discussed in the chapter on Planning Context, County government funding for the operating needs of arts organizations was firmly established after an important advocacy effort by a group of the larger arts organizations. The County government appropriated increasing amounts of funds beginning in 1996 for allocation to the "majors" based on their prior fiscal year's revenues. These operating grants have been distributed on the basis of a relatively short application form without any narrative about the organization's goals or what they intended to accomplish with these funds. Unlike other categories, grant applications for this funding were not reviewed by peer panels and have come to be seen as an entitlement grant without competition among organizations.

The County government also appropriated a smaller amount of funds to support grants to organizations under $100,000 in revenues. These "organizational enhancement" grants were limited to $3,000 each. Applications have been reviewed by a peer panel to determine the distribution of funds. Due to the limited amount of funding, organizations often have been awarded less than $3,000. For these smaller organizations, funding has been a competitive process.

In addition to operating grants, the County Executive instituted a process for funding one-time Cultural Facility Improvements Grants. Although funded from the County's operating budget, these grants are only for use in purchasing equipment, renovating space, or constructing new facilities. The "one-time" nature of this grant is favored by elected officials because it does not constrain the government to fund them year after year. In changing economic times, they can be increased, reduced or eliminated to reflect funds available. They do not have the same impact on the budget as support for operating expenses where ongoing and increasing expenses would appear to call for ongoing and increasing support from the County government.

Private Sector Giving

Private sector funding is also an important part of the mix. It should be noted, however, that private sector support generally lags behind comparable regions of the country. This

is true for two important sectors – individual giving and business/corporate support. The exception is in the area of foundations, where funding seems to be in line with national trends and averages. This shortfall of funding from the private sector represents something of a paradox in that Maryland is home to many nonprofit organizations. According to a 1997 study, nonprofits provide one out of every 12 jobs in Maryland, and new organizations are being created at a rapid rate. While that employment pattern could be an indicator of higher levels of private giving, it may more accurately be an indicator that private charity is spread thinly among many charitable purposes, according to David P. Hutchinson, President of the Greater Baltimore Committee.

Cultural purposes face particular challenges in Maryland. Charitable contributions to the arts and humanities are the least popular among fifteen causes, according to the definitive statewide study of charity, *Maryland Gives.* Only 30% of donors give to the arts and humanities, contrasting with an 81% rate for persons in need, 76% for youth and 72% for health and medicine. Cultural giving even trailed behind giving to other countries. The *Maryland Gives* survey recorded responses like "the arts are not warm and fuzzy" and "not everyone benefits from a museum."

Foundations

There is a generalized perception that area foundations are doing their share of the cultural funding, given their relative sizes and the demands for funding that they are experiencing, not just in the cultural realm, but from all charitable causes. This is most true of the large, general-purpose foundations. Many respondents in the planning process noted that Montgomery County cultural groups should go beyond the larger, well-established foundations and develop relationships with the numerous family-designated funds that collectively hold sizeable wealth, but that are currently more aligned with nonprofits in Washington, DC, or in Baltimore.

The foundations interviewed in the planning process expressed considerable concern about the large number of capital campaigns in the pipeline for nonprofits in the DC area – more than 60 at the present time, ranging from $500,000 to $200 million (not including area universities). Foundation representatives expressed some concern that they would not be able to support this many fund-raising efforts, however worthy the purpose. Several interviewees indicated they would be more inclined to support a package proposal from Montgomery County cultural institutions at a higher level than the sum of smaller gifts to multiple campaigns. They stated that the Arts and Humanities Council would be the logical agency to advance such a package proposal. This option was discussed with representatives of various arts and humanities groups that have or are planning capital campaigns. After much thoughtful discussion, the idea of a combined capital campaign was not adopted, with the groups citing the various stages of development and schedules of the individual campaigns and the differing abilities of the various cultural groups to provide support for a combined capital campaign.

Business/Corporations

Corporate support for cultural purposes in Montgomery County is low and disappointing. With the notable exceptions of Lockheed Martin, Giant Food and a few other businesses, cultural philanthropy is not a priority; indeed, civic giving is not a high priority. Corporate giving constitutes, on the average, about four percent of the budgets of arts and humanities groups in Montgomery County, with the larger, well-established organizations receiving the lion's share of the funding. There are a number of possible explanations for this relatively low level of funding. One interviewee said that corporate civic responsibility died in the late l980s, with all the mergers and acquisitions, leaving few national and international corporate headquarters in Montgomery County. Thus, there is a lack of civic leadership emanating from the business community. Even some corporations that are headquartered in the county have an emphasis, not on civic concerns, but on certain well-defined causes. These causes align with corporate strategies and with issues that are important to corporate executives and owners.

This is not to say that Montgomery County does not have a strong business climate. The Department of Economic Development estimates that there are 30,000 to 50,000 separate businesses in the county, with a fair number of corporate headquarters, especially in the areas of biotech and telecommunications. They expect that the next great area of growth and business development will be in small Internet companies and firms that respond to the move toward federal outsourcing.

It should be noted that a significant transformation in the nature of the corporate community has taken place in the last two decades. Specifically, there has been a shift from "old economy" to "new economy" firms. Old economy businesses had to build direct connections to their local communities in order to succeed. New economy businesses may not relate to their local geographic communities at all, but may rely on national and global networks or systems for their success and prosperity. Most of the newer companies are high tech firms engaged in the biotech or telecommunications industries. Many of these young companies are not yet profitable and thus are not inclined to burden their already negative cash flow with a charitable giving program. Finally, entrepreneurs who are at the helm of these firms are still building their companies and their wealth. As they grow older, raise families and generally begin to sink deeper roots into the community, it can be expected that they may turn their attentions to local civic concerns.

Developing new philanthropic patterns in the high-tech world will be a significant challenge. One foundation officer stated that these new corporations might be responsive to the idea of a "venture capital" fund for the arts. In other words, it may be necessary to package requests in language that the corporations understand. Another interviewee thought challenging the corporate sector with public sector dollars might be a worthwhile strategy. For instance, the County government could support capital funding for new facilities with the private and corporate sector taking responsibility to create endowments for operating the new facilities.

Some corporate leaders interviewed noted heavy competition for scant corporate dollars from the larger, more nationally prominent cultural institutions in Washington, DC. Corporations believe they simply get more "bang for the buck" when investing in the national cultural institutions, especially when this also gives them local exposure. Most corporate representatives did not expect their philanthropic budgets to grow to meet the anticipated need for new cultural funding. While the proposed cultural capital campaigns were generally praised as worthwhile and complementary to one another, corporate executives felt that the collective total of private dollars being sought was daunting. Some expressed hope that the arts and humanities would join together in a single united capital campaign.

One corporate giving officer noted that the company receives more than 100 new requests for funding from nonprofit organizations every week, a number far beyond their capacity to support. Thus, the company has adopted a policy to limit giving to clearly defined priorities that allow them to quickly screen requests. One interviewee noted the lack of any cultural focal point around which Montgomery County cultural groups could come together. This absence could account for the lack of any "sense of urgency" in the area of arts and humanities funding. Contributing to the lack of a focal point is the feeling that it is more difficult to develop a sense of civic responsibility and pride in a county as opposed to a city. In general, business interviewees observed that stepping up charitable giving will be a tough sell in the foreseeable future, but that it would be most likely to happen if local employees are actively involved in the cause seeking support.

Individuals

Although it is the nation's fifth wealthiest state, Maryland ranks at the bottom in several measures of giving, particularly among those who make more than $100,000 per year, the group with the highest disposable income. According to the Schaefer Center for Public Policy, University of Baltimore, Marylanders lagged $200 behind the national average charitable deduction on federal income tax returns in l997. Maryland ranks in the lowest 20% among the 50 states in the "Generosity Index." Maryland's wealthiest citizens contribute less, as a percentage of their incomes, than wealthy persons in other parts of the country. In 1997, those who had more than $200,000 a year in adjusted gross income (average $483,000) claimed an average charitable deduction of $16,455. Nationally, their counterparts claimed deductions averaging $20,398. Ironically, Maryland citizens who earned less than $75,000 a year actually gave more than the average American with a similar income. In terms of specific causes, Marylanders are most likely to donate to social welfare causes, religious organizations, police and fire groups and nonprofit organizations that work to cure disease. Organizations promoting the arts and humanities, drug and alcohol treatment, and overseas relief ranked lowest.

The gap in individual giving shows up dramatically in the budgets of Maryland nonprofit organizations. They receive on the average only 4% of their budgets from private giving, as opposed to 10% nationally. Several reasons have been cited for the individual giving shortfall. One is that many Maryland residents work outside the county, such as Montgomery County residents employed in Prince George's County or DC, and thus

have divided loyalties. Another reason is that among the newly rich, stock market gains of growing companies have not yet produced a feeling of wealth, and, in many cases, young entrepreneurs are concentrating on building their companies, not giving away their new-found wealth. A third reason is that the region lacks a general "culture of giving" that characterizes the old established communities of the northeastern United States or the South.

Despite the current picture, Maryland has historically been a center of philanthropic giving. At the end of the 19th century, wealthy leaders such as Johns Hopkins, George Peabody and Enoch Pratt made large gifts to found universities, libraries and hospitals. That tradition continued into the 20th century with families such as Blaustein, Meyerhoff and Strauss, who invested their fortunes in foundations that expanded the Johns Hopkins University and gave the Baltimore Symphony a home. William and Henry Walters left their Mount Vernon house full of European and Asian Art, creating the Walters Art Gallery.

For many organizations, though, individual giving remains an important source of funding, with private donors gaining in relative importance the smaller the organizations are. While these donations only make up 4% of the large cultural organizations budgets, they account for 14% of revenues of medium-sized organizations and 21% of revenues of smaller organizations. To be sure, this differential does not mean that individual contributions can make up for other types of support. Rather it indicates that mid-sized and smaller groups lack access to the public, foundation and corporate support and must make ends meet with whatever private donations they can muster.

Funding Needs of Montgomery County Cultural Groups

There are two important aspects of cultural funding in Montgomery County. First are the capital campaigns that include support for the construction of new facilities and endowments to guarantee the maintenance and operations money for those facilities. Second, but no less important, are the annual operating needs for the arts and humanities organizations.

Capital/Endowment Needs

Eight cultural institutions in Montgomery County have or will have major capital and/or endowment plans for the five-year period of 1999-2004. They are American Film Institute (AFI), Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts (BAPA), BlackRock Center for the Arts, Glen Echo Park, Olney Theatre Center, Pyramid Atlantic, Round House Theatre, and Strathmore Hall Arts Center. A total of $206,995,000 is required to construct the facilities currently on the drawing boards and establish endowment funds for future operations and maintenance. Facility construction costs are estimated at $167,495,000 and endowment proposals total $39,500,000.

It has been proposed by the cultural institutions that the public sector appropriate the majority of the capital dollars necessary. In combination, county, state and federal

sources are expected to finance $146,570,000 as follows: Montgomery County at $79,100,000, the State of Maryland at $61,170,000, and the federal government at $6,300,000. Private sector sources that are required to complete the projects and establish the endowments as planned total $60,425,000. As of the end of the calendar year 2000, the eight institutions report that they have secured $13,284,000 or 22% of the money needed to complete these projects and establish their endowments.

There is a critical need to ensure that the maintenance and operations monies required for new and renovated facilities will be available from a stable source. Without such a source, ongoing support for daily operations and long-term maintenance of the new venues cannot be guaranteed and will be left to vagaries of the annual budget cycles. All of the maintenance and operation funding flows through the AHCMC grants program. As noted earlier, there also is a significant demand on this source of funds due to the growth in the size and number of nonprofit arts and humanities organizations that qualify for operating grants.

The County government should investigate creating a designated source of funds specifically for operating grants. The source could be designated county revenue or could come from a cultural taxing district. Several other jurisdictions use the hotel-motel tax as a designated revenue source. The Denver Scientific and Cultural Facilities District is an example of a successful revenue district.

Public Sector Support for Capital Projects

During the interviews that took place during the early phases of this planning process, most arts groups were optimistic that the area's vibrant economy, which has yielded significant state and county budget surpluses, will place their projects in a favorable position for public sector support at the proposed levels. Significant county and state dollars have already been appropriated for some of these projects. These appropriations have reinforced a positive outlook for the entire package of projects. Interviews with County government staff did not suggest the figures proposed were unreasonable, although some County Council members have expressed hope that the private sector would increase its level of giving for these capital campaigns. The County Executive has been very public in his support for construction and renovation of arts facilities. Despite these optimistic views, recent downturns in the economy suggest that the County's elected officials will be carefully evaluating the cost of future capital expenditures for cultural purposes.

It should be noted that the County government has funded capital projects both from its capital budget and its operating budget. If a facility is owned by the County government, as is Strathmore Hall, then construction funds are appropriated through the County's Capital Improvements Program (C.I. P.) budget. If a facility is owned by a nonprofit organization, the County government has provided support through appropriations in the County's annual operating budget either as a direct grant or as a part of the Cultural Facility Improvements Grant program administered by the Department of Recreation. The review processes for the C.I.P. and for the operating budget are considerably

different, but both clearly are subject to alterations necessitated by changes in the county's economy.

Private Sector Support for Capital Projects

The private sector picture could be described as cautiously optimistic. Few interviewees could recall any previously conducted capital campaigns in Montgomery County for county-based nonprofits. The few identified campaigns were modest in size, ranging from $3.5 million to $11 million. The arts groups that are planning private sector campaigns are seeking an ambitious total of more than $60.4 million from corporations, foundations and individual patrons over a five-year period.

Most corporate representatives did not expect their philanthropic budgets to grow to meet this rather substantial need. While proposed projects were generally praised as "unique, worthy and complementary to one another" by corporate executives, the collective total of private dollars being sought was considered quite aggressive. None of the representatives from the private sector wanted to be in a position of responding negatively to any capital requests coming their way. For some, this concern was coupled with hope that the arts and humanities groups would join together into a single capital campaign. For other interviewees, however, targeted gifts more closely matched their philanthropic style; they plan to say "no" to some campaigns, despite their discomfort in doing so. For virtually all corporate representatives consulted, Lockheed Martin was identified as the corporation most looked to for leadership. A gift by Lockheed Martin to a particular project was seen as a very positive signal to other potential corporate donors.

One important factor in the business giving discussion that merits identification is the "amenities strategy" of the County Planning Board. The Planning Board sometimes requires the "giving" of an amenity as part of private development projects. Some cultural institutions have been the beneficiaries of this well-designed economic development approach including BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown and Round House Theatre in Bethesda. However, for the corporations involved, their position on capital campaigns for the arts is "I gave at the office." There is no doubt that the amenities strategy has leveraged considerably more dollars from corporations than one or more campaigns would have leveraged. Nevertheless, the amenities strategy has taken some private sector prospects out of the potential campaign pool.

Regional (non-corporate) foundation representatives reported that the number of capital and endowment campaigns under consideration in the Washington, DC, metro area is "mind boggling." One interviewee cited 60 campaigns in DC alone. Arena Stage, a prominent and nationally acclaimed cultural institution, was reportedly "backing off" from a $50+ million campaign proposal because of intense competition for philanthropic dollars. Notably, however, foundation representatives were more inclined to support a package proposal from Montgomery County cultural projects at a higher level than the sum of smaller gifts to numerous individual campaigns. Despite that fact, discussions with the affected institutions suggested that there are insurmountable barriers to such a

combined capital campaign including confidential donor lists and widely differing time frames.

Representatives from corporations, foundations and cultural institutions were in universal agreement that the time had come for individual patrons to "come to the table" in significant ways. Without them, there was little confidence that the $60,425,000 in private sector support was possible. However, there was great confidence that individual families would rise to the occasion. There was widespread belief that the facility plans under development would attract the interest of affluent residents. Optimism prevailed that these new buildings would have the "panache" currently lacking in the cultural landscape to attract individuals of means. Unfortunately, no feasibility studies have been conducted to verify this supposition.

Public Sector Support for Annual Operating Revenues

Support from government is an important and growing component of the funding mix in Montgomery County. The State of Maryland has a strong Arts Council that provides important funding for local cultural groups. Federal funding is a small, but important piece in the budgets of several organizations, but in the public sector, Montgomery County government has been most important in recent years

The County government has provided about 5% of the dollars needed to support about 20 of the larger local arts and humanities organizations. At the same time, local government support has lagged behind other urbanized counties around the nation. As part of this planning process, Americans for the Arts, a Washington, DC based national arts service organization, was commissioned to develop a comparative study of Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council and nine other county local arts agencies (LAAs) across the country. (A full copy of that study is included as Appendix D.) The other counties included five county LAAs that are part of county government and four LAAs that are nonprofit agencies, providing services under a contract with county government, as is the case in Montgomery County.

One of the most significant findings of this study was the dramatic difference in the budget levels among these agencies. The average budget for the nine study participants was $8,003,879, while the budget for the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County was $729,469 for the last year in the study period. When including all county government spending for operating support of the arts and humanities, Montgomery County spent $2,949,040 as compared to an average of $11,426,155 for the other nine counties. This means that Montgomery County was spending $3.47 *per capita* while the other counties were spending an average of $8.14 *per capita*.

Many LAAs have a designated revenue source to support their operations. Four of the nine agencies receive a portion of the county's hotel occupancy tax. Two receive a share of the local sales tax. Another two get a set percentage of the local property tax. One agency gets a share of the tax on video rentals and another gets a share of proceeds of

local ticket and admissions taxes. Montgomery County has none of these designated sources to support the AHCMC and other cultural activities in the county.

It should also be remembered that Montgomery County government is the "city" government for the urbanized areas of the county other than the incorporated areas of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Takoma Park. Densely populated areas like Bethesda and Silver Spring are not separately incorporated cities that have their own city arts funding and support programs. Thus, it falls to the County government to supply cultural support and services that might otherwise be provided by a city government.

Private Sector Support for Annual Operating Revenues

While most community leaders maintain a positive outlook on the financial capability of Montgomery County and its citizens to secure the capital funding needed for arts facilities, the outlook for increased annual revenues necessary to operate the new facilities was more cautious. Arts groups were applauded for proposing endowments to operate more expensive facilities and to increase the quantity and quality of programs. It was noted, however, that three-quarters of the endowment funds proposed are for the Strathmore concert hall and education center. There was skepticism that the remaining seven arts groups could grow annual resources quickly enough to meet their needs. Few of the cultural organizations interviewed by the consultant team had engaged in forward business planning that identified the sources of annual revenues needed to support their operations following construction. When asked about projected operating expenses after ribbon cuttings, most groups responded that they were in the process of conducting these analyses. The development of legitimate and objectively accountable business *pro formas* for each group may be the most important call for action in the process of evaluating the viability of these groups following construction of their facilities.

The development of these future business plans must include the examination of annual revenues. In Montgomery County, an analysis of annual revenues must begin with a discussion of earned income, e.g., ticket sales, class tuition. Cultural institutions of Montgomery County take great pride in their high levels of earned income (contrasted with contributed income and government support) as a percentage of total annual revenues. They are to be commended for an extraordinary entrepreneurial approach to revenue generation rarely seen in the nonprofit cultural sector. Earned revenues of six of the larger cultural organizations interviewed ranged from 71% to 83%. These figures are remarkably consistent across disciplines and across budget sizes. A comparison to national standards would probably find at least 10% less in most cases and significantly less in some.

Annual revenues of Montgomery County cultural groups are growing at significant rates. When asked if the rate of earned income could continue to climb, most arts leaders believed it could. Reasons often cited for the optimism were prosperity in the county, severe traffic congestion that makes local opportunities more and more attractive, and the advent of new and/or expanded facilities. Most interviewees suggested the need to direct more time and attention to annual fund-raising efforts to help fuel anticipated growth.

Individual patronage and corporate sponsorships are significantly lower across financial statements of arts and humanities organizations in Montgomery County than nationally. For example, individual contributions as percentages of total annual revenues ranged from 2% to 17% for six of the larger cultural institutions. These six institutions reported combined revenues of $5,144,000 in FY 97-98 actual end-of-year financial statements. The combined annual contributions of individual patrons were $415,000 or 8% of total annual revenues. Based on national averages, one would expect significantly higher figures both in dollars and corresponding percentages for individual contributions.

Analysis of contributions from individual patronage, corporations and foundations reported by the other arts groups suggests disproportionate support from foundations in the private mix. For example, three major cultural organizations derive 25%, 38% and 44% of their annual contributions from foundations. These would be extremely high numbers in any community.

Individual patronage usually goes hand in glove with ticket sales and other forms of earned revenues from participatory activities like board service. With strong ticket sales and tuition revenues reported by cultural agencies, one has to wonder why individual contributions have not followed suit. There does not appear to be sophisticated dialogue around the question of individual fundraising that would suggest that the arts and humanities groups have mature solicitation techniques and systems in place. Two larger organizations report the addition of full-time development staff as a relatively recent phenomenon. Arts and humanities groups are in critical need of additional training in fund raising techniques, as well as operating support for additional development, to achieve increased individual patronage.

Individual contributions and, to a lesser extent, corporate contributions have the potential to become significant sources of annual revenue for arts and humanities organizations in Montgomery County. Corporate executives have no recent history of leadership and involvement with local cultural groups and few major companies have headquarters in the county. Although the potential for increased corporate sponsorship exists with maturing marketing programs and better facilities, time and attention directed toward individual solicitation would seem to have a greater likelihood of success.

Grant-making and Funding Distribution Issues

The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, a private nonprofit organization, is the primary arts and humanities grant-making agency in the county. It is designated by an ordinance of Montgomery County government as the local arts and humanities agency for the purposes of distributing annual County government dollars for operating support. During the planning process, a number of issues emerged with respect to distribution of grants.

The County Council articulated one of the most important issues relating to this plan when it commissioned the study. The members expressed concern about the dramatic rise in the level of funding requests, particularly for capital purposes. They raised a fundamental question about what is an appropriate level of County government support and how should it be administered. Corollary issues include what processes should be instituted to evaluate the funding decisions with respect to particular cultural groups and the ability of each group that is funded to raise the needed private sector matching dollars. Fundamentally, these are accountability questions that can and should be addressed by empowering the AHCMC to increase the level of scrutiny of funding requests for both operating and capital support. One important means of achieving better accountability would be for AHCMC to provide technical assistance to arts and humanities groups in developing organizational business plans that will guide their fundraising and organizational development efforts.

Another set of issues that arose in the planning process could be described as "equity" issues. The equity or fairness questions came up in several contexts. The first relates to the method by which the level of grants for the larger cultural groups was set. The current system allocates funding to groups based upon their revenues. While one could argue that this system scales the funding in relation to the size of the organizations, others argue that the system favors institutions that charge higher ticket prices. Some organizations choose to keep their ticket prices low to ensure access to their programs by a broad cross-section of the community. By allocating dollars based on revenues, rather than audience size, quality of programs, community outreach, etc., the system penalizes some groups, they argue. A related concern could be articulated as a question of rewarding stability versus merit. Should the purpose of grants be to reward those organizations who have the most highly priced products to offer the community, or who have the best organizational practices? Or should the purpose of the funding be to ensure stability over time for the local cultural groups by giving reliable operating support from year to year? The answer to these questions must arise from a clear set of policy objectives that must be created and updated on a regular basis by the board of AHCMC.

The other "equity" issue has been raised by a number of small and mid-sized arts and humanities organizations. They point out that 95% of the County government funding goes to a small number of large-budget organizations that have historically received this funding. By and large, they characterize the issue by saying that "large groups get too much money." However, it would be more appropriate to characterize the issue as a situation where the County government funding pie is too small to support the full range of large, mid-sized and emerging cultural groups. Looking back to the multi-county comparative study, it is clear that Montgomery County's cultural funding is far below the level of arts and humanities funding that might be expected of a large, affluent, urbanized county.

Another important issue relates to the availability of technical or management assistance funding. To what degree should the support of AHCMC be linked to specific management assistance that could improve the operations of the arts and humanities

organizations and develop their capacities to raise money in the private sector? Universally, cultural groups interviewed during the planning process articulated the need for such technical support and, in fact, many concerns raised by local elected and appointed governmental officials spoke to the accountability that would come with improved organizational capabilities in the nonprofit cultural realm.

Technical Assistance

In addition to direct funding, there is a manifest need for technical assistance to arts and humanities organizations. Small and emerging organizations need help with basic issues, such as how to become incorporated. Organizations established over a longer period may need assistance in learning about sources of funding, such as corporate donations or individual gifts, that they have not yet tried to obtain. Organizations of all sizes and stages of development need assistance in preparing business plans. Specific types of organizations may have very specialized needs. Historical societies, for example, may need temporary help in stabilizing and creating inventories of collections; preservation groups may need help with building surveys or architectural and design assessments; and other groups may need to hire writers and researchers on a temporary basis. Virtually every kind of organization can benefit from consultants skilled in finance and accounting, fundraising, strategic planning, and other areas of nonprofit management. There also is a need to deliver technical assistance to grant applicants about the grants process, particularly those eligible for smaller funding levels at earlier stages in the funding process. Whether the Arts and Humanities Council itself needs to retain staff members with some of these skills or to compile a list so that it can refer organizations to reliable consultants is best left to future staffing decisions. But whatever the composition of AHCMC's staff, there must be funds available to organize workshops, seminars, and training sessions that will build the capacity of arts and humanities organizations.

---

1. Funding and Sustainability: RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 To support nonprofit arts and humanities organizations in Montgomery County, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) must revise its grant funding allocation process to include operating grants based on a percentage of expenses, with increased accountability and some elements of competition built into the funding model. The revised funding model should encompass both the arts and humanities and should include:

- Support for individual artists and scholars;
- Organizational support, also referred to as general operating support;
- Advancement support, i.e., support for organizations with specific growth-related needs;
- Project support for specific programs and activities;
- Technical assistance support directed to specific organizational needs, such as creating successful strategies for increasing contributed income and/or developing multi-year business plans; and

- Incentive funding to promote specific goals, such as excellence in management or programming, or responsiveness to special initiatives, such as increased private patronage or creating partnerships and mentoring relationships with emerging artists and cultural specific groups.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:

- In FY2001 budget proceedings, the County Council took action on the County Executive's recommended budget and indicated that funding levels in future years would depend on a restructured grants program.
- AHCMC convened a working group of stakeholders from the following community groups: grantees, prospective applicants, business, other nonprofit organizations, and the Cultural Plan Steering Committee to begin developing new funding categories.
- AHCMC arranged technical assistance programs and offered them to local organizations at prices significantly below-market registration fees.
- AHCMC developed guidelines for the FY2002 grants programs incorporating these recommendations.

1.2 The County government should ensure adequate funding to support each of the categories in the restructured grants program.

Lead Agencies: Office of Management and Budget
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:

- AHCMC prepared budget request based on restructured grant process to the County Executive in November 2000.
- County Executive recommends budget to the County Council.
- County Council reviews budget requests.

1.3 The level of general operating support for cultural organizations by Montgomery County should increase over a period of three years from an average of five percent of the revenues of the larger cultural institutions to a level between ten and fifteen percent of the total income or expenses of all cultural institutions, in keeping with national standards for local government support.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002 through 2007
Initial Step:

- AHCMC develops accurate figures for implementation based on new guideline categories as recommended in Recommendation 1.1.

1.4 In order to provide a stable and consistent base of funding, the County government should consider creating a designated revenue stream to support operating grants to arts and humanities organizations.

Lead Agencies: County Executive
County Council
AHCMC
Timeline: By FY 2005
Initial Steps:

- AHCMC researches alternative models for designated funding for arts.
- AHCMC initiates discussions with County Executive and County Council

---

1.5 The County government should increase funding, consistent with national standards, to support the administrative operations of the AHCMC as it evolves into a full-service local arts and humanities agency that offers the full range of grant-making programs, services and cultural development activities in response to the needs of the community. This level of administrative funding can be expected to range from eight to ten percent of the total County funding to AHCMC.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Step:

- Budget request submitted to the County government calculated as ten percent of the budget devoted to grants.

1.6 The AHCMC should serve as a convener to establish a strategic alliance with a consortium of local foundations interested in raising the thresholds for private contributions for cultural purposes, especially from corporations and individual patrons.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002-03
Initial Steps:

- Research potential foundation partners.
- Conduct initial one-on-one meeting with foundation directors.
- Convene an initial meeting with key foundation stakeholders to develop a steering committee.

1.7 At some point in the future, the arts and humanities organizations in Montgomery County should consider a unified annual campaign to generate operating funds. This should occur only after other recommendations, such as technical assistance for improved fundraising programs, have begun to be implemented and higher visibility for the arts and humanities among local corporations has been developed.

Lead Agency: AHCMC

Timeline: Starting FY 2004

Initial Steps:

- Research models for successful united arts funding programs in other cities and counties.
- Convene a group of organizations to begin exploring the possibility of a united campaign.

---

2. Cultural Facilities: FINDINGS

The Importance of Cultural Facilities in Communities

Cultural facilities perform an important community role. They draw people and create a positive economic impact on surrounding businesses. Once built, they become centerpieces of a community and often contribute to changing or enhancing a city or region's image. A ready example is provided by the image of the Sydney opera house, which has become a signature feature of communicating Australia's and that city's image to the world.

Cultural facilities also enhance the ambiance and image of the neighborhoods in which they are built, bringing with them economic value. They cause ancillary businesses to develop and enhance the commercial revitalization plans of public sector planning agencies and that of private property developers.

The presence of viable public facilities also contributes to the quality of life of our communities. A recent article in the Montgomery Extra of *The Washington Post* heralded Montgomery County's coming of age with the development of facilities that "gives [Montgomery County] residents something interesting to do near home…[T]he tipping point is a critical mass of arts group…."

Cultural destinations of the highest quality also create an environment in which organizations and artists can create the best possible product for community consumption. In creating facilities, one must take into account the unique demands in presenting different art forms. Performing and visual arts organizations need space that is technically equipped and designed to show the art form to its best advantage. Technical support and equipment should be at professional standards with amenities that meet public expectations.

Investment by communities in facilities is as important to an arts organization's well-being as their receipt of contributions or other financing. Each of these investments helps ensure the vitality and longevity of cultural institutions.

Both mature and emerging local arts organizations benefit from obtaining permanent space for their work and program development. Rather than multi-purpose space, the arts need dependable, dedicated space where people know they can consistently go to find a reliable level of quality of arts programming. They also need facilities that are accessible by both vehicular and public transportation. Only in this way do organizations build audience and revenue.

An examination of cultural facilities in the county also provides an opportunity to look at the issue of heritage and preservation. Significant elements of Montgomery County's more than 200-year history have been preserved through the efforts of public agencies,

nonprofit organizations and citizen advocates. These sites provide additional cultural destinations for residents and visitors alike and are important history lessons for our young people. Other historic properties have been lost or are in danger of being lost. This chapter on cultural facilities also addresses these heritage and preservation concerns.

In addition to facilities for the use of the public in participating in the arts and culture of the community, it is important to recognize that providing affordable live/work spaces for individual artists contributes to maintaining a community's creative brain trust. For it is these artists to whom our cultural organizations turn to mount productions, exhibitions and other cultural presentations to the public. These individuals bring their talents to bear on behalf of the community and generally enliven the creative life of the community, interacting with the business and social sector in direct and indirect ways.

Existing Facilities in the County

The consultant team visited about 25 existing facilities and sites selected by Arts and Humanities Council staff. These visits were designed to allow the consultants to assess the need for new and improved facilities that will meet the growing needs of the Montgomery County community and its cultural organizations. The sample included both publicly- and privately-owned and operated facilities. The sample was not intended to provide an exhaustive inventory of all cultural and arts facilities, but it included those that were generally recognized as the most widely used cultural venues in the county as well as those that could illuminate other facilities issues. (A description of these facilities is included as Appendix E.)

The following represents a summary of the facilities reviewed by the consultant team. This summary also highlights some of the challenges of presenting cultural programs in these venues.

Performing Spaces

At first examination, the county has a large variety of performing spaces. These include the Olney Theatre Center, Round House Theatre, the Robert A. Parilla Performing Arts Center and the Theatre Arts Arena on the Rockville campus of Montgomery College, the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre in the Rockville Civic Center Park, and a small performing space at The Writer's Center in Bethesda. On closer examination, it becomes evident that these spaces are either limited to use by resident professional companies or, if available for rental, booked so heavily as to be effectively unavailable. Others, including the Theatre Arts Arena and The Writer's Center, have limited technical features. Although the Parilla Performing Arts Center is the only fully operational "fly-house" in the county and is the best-equipped technically, much of its equipment is outdated.

The administrative and theatre space currently being used by Round House Theatre is located in a former elementary school that also houses the County Recreation Department. When Round House moves to their new home in downtown Bethesda, the

theater space could offer an opportunity for another user or users to take advantage of an existing facility.

The consultants found that theater and music groups often find it necessary to book their productions at public schools. In the case of high schools, this typically means a 1,200-1,400-seat auditorium with limited technical capabilities. Middle schools usually offer a small stage in a multi-purpose/cafeteria room setting with folding chairs for the audience. Neither environment offers the kind of audience atmosphere desirable for smaller and mid-sized performing groups whose audiences tend to range from 150 – 500.

Although several ballet companies in the county perform at the Parilla Performing Arts Center in Rockville, many dance groups based in Montgomery County can be found performing at the Dance Place in Washington, DC, or at the Publick Playhouse in Prince George's County.

Visual Arts

Visual arts exhibition facilities exist throughout the county in a variety of locations, but are limited in terms of number and size. Some of these facilities have been created in found space, such as the City Hall gallery operated by the City of Gaithersburg. Each space operates independently, some with emphasis on local artists from the immediate area, such as the gallery at the Sandy Spring Museum, or with specific thematic content, such as the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery. Strathmore Hall in North Bethesda, Glenview Mansion operated by the City of Rockville, and the Goldman Gallery at the Jewish Community Center in Rockville, represent the most formal curated and invitational exhibitions. Other exhibit spaces are located in the Friendship Heights Community Center, Kentlands Mansion, Gaithersburg's Bohrer Activity Center, and at Montgomery College. The conference center being planned for construction near the White Flint Metro Station also will include exhibit space. Other exhibitions take place at privately operated galleries, many of which are located in downtown Bethesda.

Despite these numbers, each location can host only a limited number of shows each year and local artists state emphatically that there is not enough exhibition space to allow exposure for the wide variety of talent that exists in the county. For example, a recent call for artists for a show in Gaithersburg offered an opportunity for 60 artists to hang two works each. The response was so overwhelming that the offer was changed to one work each from 120 artists and a waiting list was established.

There also is only a limited amount of publicly-supported studio space available for artists. Rockville Arts Place, supported by the City of Rockville and the Arts and Humanities Council, offers 11 studios for limited-time leases. Some studios can accommodate more than one artist so that approximately 12-16 artists work there at any given time. The renovated Barn at Kentlands in Gaithersburg also will include several artist studios. In downtown Bethesda, a group of artists has studios in a series of rented storefronts known as Bethesda ArtSpace. However, artists who participated in the planning process criticized the lack of a space in Montgomery County like the Torpedo

Factory in Alexandria, Virginia. Not only do artists have studio spaces there, but the facility is large enough to have become a tourist attraction bringing many people to see art being made as well as to purchase art.

Humanities

Humanities activities typically are not focused on a particular location or facility in the county. The exception to this is the Rockville campus of Montgomery College where the Paul Peck Humanities Institute schedules its programs. Other sites used for humanities programs include public libraries for programs sponsored by Friends of the Library, historic properties for programs sponsored by history and preservation organizations, and community centers for activities sponsored by organizations focused on a specific culture.

Facilities in Planning or Development

It is clear that in Montgomery County, cultural facilities and the programs they support are the pride of local communities. As such, it is important for the County government to consider communities that currently lack these features as locations that would benefit most from new and improved cultural venues and plan development of new facilities in these communities whenever possible.

Attention must be paid to the correct location of new facilities in order to ensure some reasonable geographic distribution of new spaces around the county and to take best advantage of current and projected transportation patterns in the county. Up-county regions and the eastern portion of the county lag behind in cultural services and facilities.

Capital development funding for existing institutions has been generous during the Duncan administration. This commitment of capital funds is exemplary. However, it has not been part of an overall evaluation process that determines the merits of individual projects, long-term facility needs, the capacity of the sponsoring group to provide an equitable share of capital and operating funds, or the availability of increased programming to utilize the new facilities.

Facilities now in the planning and development stages include:

AFI (Silver) Theater in downtown Silver Spring: The new American Film Institute (AFI) Theater in Silver Spring is part of the Silver Spring redevelopment project. The landmark art deco Silver Theater will be renovated for the American Film Institute with 400-, 225- and 75-seat screening theaters for AFI's programming.

Silver Spring Intermediate School Auditorium (Old Blair High School): This auditorium is currently unused, but plans are under consideration to renovate the facility into a 1,000-seat performing arts venue with a balcony. If this project is completed, it will be one of the few facilities in the area that could support mid-sized touring shows.

Silver Spring Civic Building: This 45,000 square foot building will be completed in FY04 as part of the Silver Spring redevelopment. It will include administrative offices and classrooms for the Round House Theatre School upper grades; a great hall of approximately 5,500-6,000 square feet to accommodate exhibitions, fairs, dance, theater, dinners and meetings; several 1,500 and 750 square foot classroom/meeting rooms; and a "front porch" that will be equipped as a stage and allow outdoor presentations to the abutting Veterans Plaza.

Imagination Stage (Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts) in downtown Bethesda: This new facility, planned as part of the construction of the County's Garage 49, will replace BAPA's existing offices and classrooms now at the former Whittier Elementary School and the children's theater located in a storefront inside White Flint. In addition to offices and classrooms, the new facility is designed to provide greatly enhanced performance and rehearsal facilities with a 340-seat theatre for the professional company and a 200-seat theatre for student productions.

BlackRock Center for the Arts, Germantown: This new organization will not only operate a new facility, but will provide a wide range of programs and will have a variety of spaces to support them. The Center is planned to provide arts education, visual arts studios and performing arts programs. The first phase performing arts facilities are community-oriented. A 125-seat drama theatre with semi-circular seating and a small thrust stage, and a flexible black box space with 100 seats for dance provide intimate settings for community uses. The BlackRock Center was made possible by the Montgomery County Planning Board who granted permission for added density at a big box shopping center in exchange for this cultural amenity. The developers' donation of land and funds allowed a nonprofit organization to be formed to undertake the design of the center and contributed to the cost of the project. Additional funds must be raised to complete the construction and support the operation of the center.

Glen Echo Park: Several groups and individuals (co-operators) use the park facilities for various cultural, visual and performing arts functions under agreements with the National Park Service. Plans are now underway with federal, state and county funding to renovate key properties on the site. This is very likely to increase the rental paid by the two performing arts organizations that are located in the Park:

> *Adventure Theatre:* This organization provides children's theatre performances and classes in a facility in the North Arcade building. The facility seats approximately 190 on a series of carpeted risers. Administrative offices, scenery, props and costumes shops are all in the same facility with little physical separation between spaces. The theater's infrastructure and technical facilities are limited and in dire need of improvement. Improved rehearsal space, additional storage and proper shop facilities also are needed.

The Puppet Co. Playhouse: This organization operates in an intimate facility seating approximately 150-200. Over 100,000 audience members, adults and children, attend their performances each year. The playhouse will move into temporary space while the building they occupy is undergoing renovation and then will move into a newly-constructed theater in the North Arcade Building.

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange: This nationally renowned company's studios are located in Takoma Park. They have purchased a duplex adjacent to their current property, a former post office, and will be renovating the new space to accommodate offices, community meeting space and a "cyber-lounge" computer center. The existing space houses studios and instructional space. In the largest studio, they are planning improvements that will allow it to be converted into a performance space when needed, with an audience of about 75 people.

Montgomery College, Takoma Park: Arts facilities at the Takoma Park campus currently are limited. However, the college is planning a new arts center that will include an auditorium with fixed seating for 500. It will be equipped with a sprung floor and a music shell making it suitable for music and dance performances. It also will include a small thrust theatre space primarily for use as a classroom but with some availability for outside use. As with the Parilla Performing Arts Center on the Rockville campus, it is expected that this center will be used both by the college and by community organizations. The center is scheduled for completion in the 2005-2006 time period.

Olney Theatre Center: The Olney Theatre Center is in the process of implementing a long-range expansion/renovation program. Already completed is a rehearsal hall that can also be used for smaller productions. The limited technical facilities and restricted sight lines in the main theater impose a limitation on the company's productions and the quality of the audience experience. The renovation program underway will address this need and provide another performing space to create a performing arts campus.

Pyramid Atlantic: Pyramid Atlantic is a nonprofit arts center dedicated to the creation and appreciation of printmaking, hand papermaking and the art of the book. They are currently located in Prince George's County and are planning to move to a 13,425 square foot site at Georgia Avenue and Ripley Street in Silver Spring. This project will provide another arts component to the Silver Spring revitalization program.

Round House Theatre: Round House Theatre currently occupies a facility in Wheaton with a theater seating about 220. They are scheduled to move into a new 400-seat theater with significantly improved technical accommodations under construction in downtown Bethesda. This is another example of the success of efforts by the Montgomery County Planning Board to obtain cultural amenities in exchange for density increases. In this case, Chevy Chase Bank is building the theater as part of

the optional method of development of their headquarters building at a prime location in Bethesda. Round House also operates education and outreach programs at a new but temporary location in downtown Silver Spring. They are scheduled to move to permanent space in downtown Silver Spring as part of the downtown redevelopment effort. They also will have a black box theater space in Silver Spring. Their current Wheaton facility is very limited. However, it will be available for other uses and might be appropriate for lectures, forums and other humanities activities.

Strathmore Hall: Plans are underway to build an $89 million concert hall and education center adjacent to Strathmore Hall. The 2,000-seat concert hall, scheduled to break ground in April, will be the first permanent home for Masterworks Chorus and the Montgomery County Youth Orchestras who currently have no administrative space or reserved performing venues. It will host performances by the National Chamber Orchestra, based in Rockville, as well as approximately 30 performances a year by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The accompanying education center will offer private classes in vocal and instrumental music. The County government and the state will each contribute $44.5 million to the project's construction. The County will own the building. The Strathmore Hall Foundation will be responsible for operating the programs and is seeking private funding to underwrite operations. The County also will build a 1,500-space parking garage at the Grosvenor/Strathmore Metro Station across Tuckerman Lane from Strathmore Hall to provide commuter parking as well as parking for the new concert hall and education center.

Facilities currently being developed and the assessment of needs undertaken by the consultants raise several issues:

1. *New projects will provide additional space for performances, but they will not substantially increase the performance venues for those groups who rely on rental space.*

New facilities currently being planned for the Round House Theatre, Olney Theatre and BAPA promise to provide improvements for these performing companies, but these facilities are not aimed at increasing opportunities for groups who rely on rental spaces. Olney Theatre's recently completed rehearsal/flexible performance space has increased that company's options. It is possible that the planned new Olney main stage facility will provide some opportunity for outside groups to gain access to the existing main theatre for productions. This could represent some new dates for groups in need of performance space.

The planned performance spaces at BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown are intended to be available for rental by community performing arts groups, but those spaces will likely be programmed by the management. The facilities are modest in scope and, while they can be expected to help ease the burden for some small groups in need of performance venues, they will not alleviate much of the rental facility shortage in the county.

Participants in the planning process cited facilities like Parilla Performing Arts Center, Fitzgerald Theatre and the Publick Playhouse (in Prince George's County) as models that need to be replicated to provide adequate space for performing groups who rely on rental space. In a recent space survey conducted by AHCMC, 30 of the 40 respondents indicated some need for rental space. Of these 30, 19 expressed a need for a theatre with fixed seating. These organizations include theater; choral, orchestral and other music groups; and dance groups.

2. *A new facility will help support the up-county population.*

Ground has been broken for a new facility in Germantown, the BlackRock Center for the Arts, which is discussed above. The City of Gaithersburg also has taken some preliminary steps toward planning for a new 500-seat facility in Gaithersburg. That facility would help support the burgeoning up-county population. Also, some study participants suggested the Fairgrounds in Gaithersburg as a good site to develop festivals. In fact, the Latino Festival draws between 40,000 and 50,000 people to the Fairgrounds each year. The Irish Festival sponsored by the National Council of Traditional Arts also is held at the Fairgrounds.

3. *Several new facilities will bring increased cultural attention and economic value to Silver Spring.*

The downtown Silver Spring cultural arts district will put that community on the cultural map. Of the projects in planning or underway, the prospect of a significant renovation of the auditorium at the old Blair High School (Silver Spring Intermediate School) provides the greatest promise for creation of a quality performing arts venue that could be usable by a wide variety of local groups, as well as national touring companies. The venue would feature 1,000 seats, an orchestra pit, and dressing rooms. A study was just completed of the costs of renovation. The community is assessing viability of the project and examining fundraising strategies.

Although the venue is located near the downtown Silver Spring redevelopment, it is far enough from the downtown area and Metro to be considered not within walking distance. Vehicle access and parking at the school for any daytime events may be problematic and it is not clear at this time whether there is enough parking available even during non-school hours. While the project makes good sense from the perspective of reuse of existing facilities, the fact that it is attached to a middle school must be reviewed for its impact on the venue's efficacy as a high-quality performance space. The cost and functional impact of the project must be carefully evaluated. Also, the fact that the school system owns the building may be a problem.

The County has created a major redevelopment project in Silver Spring, including a new Fresh Fields Market, and a major mixed-use development, with residential units, a hotel, retail, civic offices, restaurants and the Silver Theater complex to be occupied by AFI.

The financing is one-third public funding and two-thirds private funding. The public portion is financing the land acquisition, two parking garages, streetscapes, the renovation of the Silver Theatre for occupancy by AFI, and the Civic Building.

New facilities at the planned Silver Spring Civic Building could offer expanded opportunities for cultural groups. Existing facilities, such as the Wayne Avenue garage in Silver Spring and the Walter Reed Annex at Forest Glen, are good candidates for redevelopment to serve this need. Redevelopment and adaptive reuse of these types of spaces are an excellent way to join historic preservation with development of the cultural arts.

4. *A new high-profile facility--the concert hall at Strathmore--has the potential to become a focal point for cultural activity in the county.*

The planned new concert facility at Strathmore Hall in North Bethesda is expected to provide classical music programming by the National Chamber Orchestra, Montgomery County Youth Orchestras and Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra as well as a local performance venue for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. It also will provide rental space for other performances such as those produced by the Washington Performing Arts Society. The new Strathmore Hall concert venue is being designed to accommodate major orchestras and other first-class music groups. Typically, concert halls are very specialized venues, not suitable for uses other than classical music. However, this facility is being designed so that other performing arts activities, such as non-classical forms of music, can be accommodated. It appears that Strathmore Hall will become a major destination for music in Montgomery County.

For the moment, the excitement about the new concert hall has created a sense of accomplishment that is certainly well deserved. However, this should not obscure the fact that the concert hall will not accommodate theater and dance productions and that organizations presenting theater and dance performances are still in need of additional rental performance venues.

The Need for Additional Facilities

From the information gathered during the site visits and interviews with facility users and operators, a number of critical issues related to facilities have emerged.

<u>General Needs</u>

- There is a need for significant technical support and funding for upgrading of smaller, existing facilities. While the County has been generous in responding to numerous requests for capital improvement support from County general funds, there is no systematic evaluation of these proposals.

- Cultural arts facilities must address a changing population, in terms of numbers and cultural origins. The location and configuration of new facilities must respond to the development of new population centers as the county continues to grow. Attention must be paid to the correct location of new facilities to ensure that there is some reasonable geographic distribution of new spaces around the county and to take advantage of current and projected transportation patterns in the county.

- The County must plan to invest in the construction of new and renovated cultural facilities and assist the cultural institutions to create endowments and operating reserves to support the maintenance and operations of these facilities during a variety of long-term economic conditions.

<u>The Performing Arts</u>

- There is a demonstrated lack of available high quality theatrical performance rental space. Rental space is needed to serve the many emerging and mid-sized cultural organizations and larger local groups that do not have dedicated rehearsal and performance venues, as well as for small national touring acts.

- Resident companies who make full-time use of their spaces occupy most of the non-rental performance facilities within the county. This situation tends to leave groups who do not have their own performance spaces with no viable options for their productions. Of the existing performance and cultural arts facilities visited, only three are operated as "rental" facilities available to the community at large--the Parilla Performing Arts Center, the Theatre Arts Arena at Montgomery College, and the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre operated by the City of Rockville. The high level of bookings coupled with dedicated access by resident and/or student groups offers little availability to the dozens of other dance, theater and music groups in the greater community who rely on rental space.

- Many groups have attempted to use high school auditoria for their programs. However, the results have been generally reported as disappointing. Performing arts groups report issues of availability, the schools' inappropriate size and technical accommodation of their audience and productions, as well as the difficulties in negotiating use during times that compete with school activities. Schools are reportedly used as a last resort if other space is not available. While the Silver Spring Intermediate School project could address some of this need, that facility possesses many limitations.

- Several organizations are seeking immediate renovation of their existing facility or a new space. Adventure Theatre and the Puppet Company at Glen Echo Park are waiting for resolution of their space and lease issues, as well as final decisions about the future of Glen Echo Park as a cultural arts area. Montgomery Playhouse has lost the lease on its space and is currently seeking a new location.

- None of the existing facilities in the county is large enough, or well enough equipped technically, to support any major large-scale touring productions or popular music event, although it appears that the new Strathmore Concert Hall will mitigate a large portion of this need insofar as music is concerned.

  Given the un-addressed needs of existing and new groups in the community who rely on rental space, two additional 450-seat multi-user theaters are needed. Potential locations for these include eastern Montgomery County and Gaithersburg.

The Visual Arts

- Visual arts exhibition facilities exist throughout the county in a variety of locations. but are limited in terms of number and size. Many of these exhibition spaces have been created in found spaces such as the Friendship Heights Community Center and Rockville City Hall. Each space operates independently, some with emphasis on local artists from the immediate area, some with thematic exhibitions. Some exhibit local artists as well as national and/or international artists.

- There are insufficient locations for visual artists and visual arts organizations to exhibit their work and there is an ongoing need for studio space or live/work space for artists. Some studios are available at Rockville Arts Place and a few more will become available at the Barns at Kentlands. Expanding this supply is not an easy matter to address, given the general lack of underutilized or unoccupied industrial buildings in the county that in other locales have been used to meet these needs. Some opportunities for visual artists to exhibit their work exist in the county, but subsidized studios or live/work space is scarce and most artists feel that more exhibit space would be quickly filled.

The Humanities

- Quality venues, specifically dedicated for lectures, seminars and other humanities activities, are quite limited. Generally, the support for performing arts in the county, as measured by the number of facilities devoted to performing arts, far surpasses the number of venues reserved for the humanities.

- Numerous participants have commented, throughout the planning process, about the lack of any major museum space in the county. Perhaps this can be explained by Montgomery County's adjacency to the nation's capital with its many world-class museum institutions. On the other hand, it does seem surprising that, in a locale with this degree of urbanization, this degree of affluence, this degree of educational attainment, and the artifacts that accompany a rich 200-year history, no county museum has been created.

- During interviews and public forums, many comments were received about County-owned historic sites being neglected. These are resources that cannot be replaced once lost. Concerns also were expressed about the deterioration of privately-owned

historic sites. Recently, the county has been designated as a "heritage tourism area." Hopefully, this will lead to greater awareness of and more resources for preservation of historic sites.

Incubator Spaces

- In addition to the performance and presentation facility needs expressed by the smaller groups in the county, there has been a strong need voiced for incubator spaces. These spaces provide a safe starting point for emerging artists and nascent arts and humanities organizations. Common administrative, rehearsal, studio and shop facilities available on a short-term basis (two to four years) can serve to foster the development of cultural groups in the county. These facilities will be especially important if organizations are to emerge that represent the many growing ethnic voices in the community.

---

2. Cultural Facilities: RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural facilities are a critical component of the infrastructure that supports cultural arts programs. The County government has embarked on an ambitious effort to support the development of the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. The following recommendations address key elements of this effort:

2.1 To meet the current and growing need for cultural facilities, the County should continue to support the development of new facilities and the maintenance and renovation of existing facilities through the Capital Improvements Program (C.I.P.) and through the Cultural Facility Improvements Grant program from the County's Operating Budget.

Every community develops its own pattern for the planning, development and funding of its cultural facilities. At the same time, there are several national trends that should be noted and that might impact Montgomery County's long-term facility development program. Those trends include public/private partnerships in the building of new cultural facilities, public ownership and maintenance of cultural facilities, and long-term leases of these facilities to nonprofit cultural groups for operations and programming. While Montgomery County may not be ready to follow these trends, particularly in requiring major private sector support for facility construction, future planning should move in these directions.

Although this is reiterated here, it is, in reality, a funding recommendation. The County should continue to increase its operating support for local arts and cultural groups and should continue to increase its funding to support capital facility development. At the same time, it is important to note that the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of these facilities are essential parts of the program.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Montgomery County Department of Recreation
Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Timeline: FY 2002-06
Initial Steps:

- Begin planning for the next CIP submission and County Operating Budget cycle.
- Develop a process of evaluating facility proposals.

2.2 The County Recreation Department, in consultation with AHCMC, should initiate a process to review and prioritize funding requests for Cultural Facility Improvements Grants from the County's Operating Budget, including a requirement that cultural organizations planning new or enlarged facilities submit a multi-year business plan for operations if they are requesting $100,000 or more in government support.

One of the driving impulses behind this cultural planning process arose from a concern on the part of the County Council about the number of cultural facility capital improvement requests that it was receiving each year. The concern centered on the perception that there was no overall vision guiding capital development and, perhaps more importantly, no meaningful review that would assess the merits of each request. It is not the intention of the consultant team to suggest that the projects funded in the past were not worthwhile or that the current requests are without merit. Rather, it is simply suggested that a panel review process will give the County greater confidence that these projects are needed and will give substantial benefits to the citizens of Montgomery County. It is recommended that this review process include requirements for the submission of a business plan for grant requests that exceed $100,000 and for a site visit for requests that exceed $500,000.

Only a few of the organizations requesting funding assistance for capital facility development and renovation have done forward planning to determine what the impact of expanded/improved facilities will have on their programs and on their maintenance and operations costs. In many cases, organizations may simply be unfamiliar with such planning methods. In order to ensure meaningful evaluation of funding requests for these purposes, the Arts and Humanities Council should assist the cultural groups in developing such business plans through a technical assistance program. While this effort will entail some up-front costs on the part of the County, they will be minor in comparison to total dollars that have been and continue to be spent on this annual capital funding process.

This recommendation is that there be an annual review process including a panel review to evaluate the requests. The panel would be composed of persons knowledgeable in the arts and cultural disciplines, as well as architects and public policy makers. The requests should be evaluated on criteria that would include but not be limited to

- Financial stability of the requesting organization, considering its annual revenues and expenditures, its balance sheet and audit, and its financial reserves and debt positions.
- Assessment of the quality of the requesting organization's programming and community outreach activities.
- Evidence, in the form of a sound business plan, that the requesting organization will be able to garner new resources needed for maintenance and operations of the new/renovated facility.
- Evaluation of the project for which funding is requested, in the larger context of long-term facility needs of the requesting organization. Is this request part of a larger, multi-phase facility development program? For how many years will the new/renovated facility meet the needs of the requesting organization?
- Development of priorities, i.e., how does this request measure up to the other projects seeking funding support? Which projects will yield the greatest benefit in terms of alleviating the current shortage of exhibition and performance venues? Is this a project that, if not completed, will result in a larger deferred maintenance bill later? Will this project address critical life safety issues or ADA requirements, which may be mandated by law?

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Department of Recreation
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:
- FY2002 requests were reviewed by a panel including representatives of AHCMC, Recreation Department, and Department of Public Works and Transportation.
- Continue to refine funding guidelines for distribution including business plans for requests of $100,000 or more and site visits for organizations with requests of $500,000 or more.

2.3 Because the Cultural Facility Improvements Grant program requires that organizations spend money on projects before being reimbursed for these expenses, the County should create a revolving loan fund to advance monies to organizations that receive these grants as "bridge loans" before the grant dollars are disbursed.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Department of Recreation
Montgomery County Department of Finance
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2003
Initial Steps:
- Convene meeting among cultural groups and County departments to discuss process.
- Work with county's Alliance of Nonprofits to advocate for more equitable and workable contract procedures.

2.4 The County should build and/or support the development of new cultural presentation facilities. New facilities should include:

At least one theater available at affordable rates to multiple users.
The process needs to ensure that there will be access by all *county-based* nonprofit dance, theater, music and other performing groups on an equitable basis.

New performing arts spaces should be planned to meet the following criteria: a dedicated management entity to facilitate rentals and programming functions to promote wide community use; high-quality mid-sized (400-1,000 seats) theatrical spaces with full stage rigging, lighting and sound equipment; large rehearsal/multi-use space (equivalent to stage size); lobby space with provision for visual arts exhibitions or dedicated gallery space; and placement of facilities consistent with county growth and transportation policies.

At least one visual art exhibition space to display work by county artists.

This space should be designed to include museum-quality space for the display of work by the county's professional artists, as well as galleries for rotating exhibits of additional artwork.

Lead Agencies: AHCMC
Planning Board
County Executive and County Council
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:

- Identify potential sites in the county.
- Hold discussions with Planning Board to identify possible alternative private-sector development in the same manner that the BlackRock and Round House Theatre facilities were built.
- Identify potential funding sources or mechanisms.
- Begin planning submission for the FY03 CIP.

2.5 The County should develop a request for proposals process for the reuse of the theater facility now used by the Round House Theatre to ensure that this space continues to be available for cultural activities when Round House moves into its new venue. Due to the shortage of cultural performing and presenting space, the selection process should give added weight to a feasible proposal that will allow the space to be used by more than one cultural organization.

Considering the shortage of cultural spaces, the County should move quickly to get any facilities in transition back on line. The Round House Theatre space, with 220 seats, will continue to be an important venue. The County should ask the Arts and Humanities Council to assist in identifying potential users who could develop proposals for use of

this space. The facility could continue to be operated as a theater or might be an excellent opportunity to create a facility that is dedicated to humanities programs, such as lectures, workshops and seminars.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Department of Recreation
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2001 - 02
Initial Steps:

- Recreation Department, with the help of AHCMC, begin developing the RFP and evaluation criteria.
- Determine when Round House will vacate premises.
- Write and distribute RFP using AHCMC organizational list.
- Review proposals and contract with selected organization(s).

2.6 The County should support the development of one or more incubator spaces accompanied by support services to assist emerging artists and arts and humanities organizations, with particular attention to the needs of culturally specific communities. The cultural usage of these incubators should be overseen by the AHCMC.

Montgomery County has many small cultural groups that are struggling to survive. In many instances, they represent the efforts of newly arrived immigrant groups to find some cultural and artistic expression in their new communities. In other cases, they are simply small and emerging groups that are highly dependent on volunteer staff, with scant resources to devote to the most basic organizational infrastructure. Incubators have proven around the country to be especially effective tools in beginning the process of institutionalization that will ensure that these groups will survive and thrive over the long haul. At a minimum, an incubator should include:

- Office spaces with shared equipment such as copiers, computers, etc.;
- A common meeting area;
- Shared reception facilities;
- A small rehearsal space; and
- A dedicated management entity to promote efficient use of the facilities.

Other desirable elements would include:

- Gallery spaces and visual arts studios; and
- A small, flexible performance space of 150-300 seats.

In developing these spaces, the County should evaluate existing spaces for possible redevelopment and adaptive reuse to foster the spirit of historic preservation. Possible sites might be the Walter Reed Annex at Forest Glen or the Wayne Avenue Garage. In addition, the creation of incubator spaces should be considered whenever the County develops new, community based arts facilities.

Lead Agency: AHCMC

Timeline: FY 2002 – 04
Initial Steps:

- Research successful incubator models around the country, exploring the possibility of working on the creation of not just a cultural incubator, but also a nonprofit incubator.
- Review redevelopment agenda for county.
- Work on overall concept and plan.
- Convene potential users.
- Submit to County Executive for County CIP.

2.7 In consultation with the many historical and cultural organizations in the county, the County government or the Montgomery County Planning Board should begin planning for the development of a county Museum of Culture and History. Planning for this museum should consider the inclusion of art, technology, science, humanities and history. The museum should provide a location for the exhibition of local history collections, museum quality space for loaned exhibitions and artwork, and meeting and lecture spaces for history and humanities programs.

Montgomery County is a rapidly urbanizing area with a sophisticated, educated and affluent citizenry. Despite that, there are only a few museums in the county and these are devoted to a very specific topics, e.g., the Sandy Spring Museum, the National Capital Trolley Museum and the Sandy Spring Slave Museum. No doubt the proximity to Washington, DC, and its many world-class museum institutions has inhibited the development of indigenous cultural museums in the county. At the same time, the population of the county is large enough, and has a demographic profile that would support a museum, particularly an institution that would offer the opportunity to exhibit the many smaller historic collections that tell the rich story of Montgomery County's history.

If developed, this county Museum at a minimum could serve the following functions: a) provide a location for the Montgomery County Historical Society collection; b) provide museum-quality rotating galleries for various visual arts exhibitions; and c) provide meeting and lecture spaces.

Lead Agencies: Historic Preservation Office and Commission
Montgomery County Historical Society
Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2004
Initial Steps:

- AHCMC convene affected agencies to initiate planning for the Museum.
- Obtain funding to commission facility usage study by outside consultant.

2.8 The Montgomery County Planning Board should continue to encourage developers to provide cultural amenities as part of their developments in exchange for increased density. The cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg should also seek ways to include cultural amenities in their developments. The AHCMC should provide a list of needed cultural amenities based on the recommendations of this Plan.

This policy has been proven to be a successful strategy to create new cultural facilities. The most notable examples of this are the BlackRock Center for the Arts and Round House Theatre, which were mandated as part of the approval process for major commercial developments. Several of the facilities recommended in this plan would be suitable for development by these means, including multi-user performance venues and incubator spaces. As an alternative to developing a facility, developers should be offered the opportunity to pay a cultural impact fee in lieu. That fee could be pegged at 75% or 80% of the cost of creating a new facility in order to encourage the development of a cultural facilities trust fund that could be used to construct new facilities or renovate existing venues.

The Montgomery County Planning Board should work with the Arts and Humanities Council to compile a list of critical cultural facilities that need to be developed. The priority list should include not only exhibition and performance venues, but also other needed facilities such as costume and set shops, storage facilities, rehearsal facilities, etc. This list should be reviewed and updated annually.

Naturally, it cannot be assumed that an appropriate developer amenity opportunity will always emerge at the proper time. If it does not appear that this mechanism will result in the development of a needed facility within a reasonable period of time, the County should pursue alternative means of building the facility.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Planning Board
Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg
AHCMC

Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing.

Initial Steps:

- AHCMC surveys constituents to determine detailed needs and potential amenities.
- Planning Board meets with AHCMC to develop list of potential amenities and sites and strategy for allowing fee in lieu of a facility.

2.9 The County should continue to pursue a strategy of cultural districts and/or arts and entertainment districts as it plans new facilities.

The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County currently is working to develop arts and entertainment districts in the county. An arts and entertainment district is

a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor of attraction.

Like Providence, Pittsburgh, Tucson and New York City who have similar districts in place, the concept will enable areas of Montgomery County to use the arts like an enterprise zone to promote economic development and to create new jobs in older areas that need to be revitalized. In these cities, officials have turned to artists for help to further economic vitality. The districts will provide tax incentives to artists and arts organizations that have moved to establish an arts and entertainment district and then in turn bring back those who have stopped coming to town centers for shopping and amusement. In Providence, for example, there is a waiting list of over a hundred artists ready to move into formerly vacant, now renovated retail buildings that will serve as artists' lofts, galleries and dance studios.

Arts and entertainment districts in the county will each be unique. Some will be economic tools for urban renewal while, in other, areas they will be developed to encourage a spirit and sense of place. The opportunity exists to use the arts "proactively" that is, to stave off the crisis other communities have experienced by enhancing, encouraging and enlarging that which already exists. It is an economic "wellness" strategy on a community-wide scale.

There are many areas of the County that could be developed as an arts and entertainment district such as Gaithersburg, Rockville, Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Wheaton. There are already committees working on establishing districts in Bethesda and Silver Spring. Undoubtedly, the effort to do this in Silver Spring, with the Civic Center, the American Film Institute complex and the Round House Theatre School, will be rewarded with increased public participation and economic activity. Each decision to create a new cultural facility should look for nearby opportunities that might form the nucleus of an arts and entertainment district.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County
Chambers of Commerce
City of Gaithersburg
AHCMC

Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing

Initial Steps:

- Work to implement arts and entertainment district in Silver Spring.
- Work with County to develop plan for cultural district in Bethesda.
- Continue efforts with the City of Gaithersburg to develop cultural district.

2.10 As the Montgomery County Planning Board reviews and updates community master plans, consideration should be given to identifying potential sites for future cultural facilities.

It is not possible for a cultural plan of this breadth and scope to study potential facility sites on a detailed community-by-community basis. However, this certainly falls within the purview of the Montgomery County Planning Board's community planning activities. The Planning Board should consult with AHCMC during the planning process for each community to identify potential sites for future cultural facilities.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Planning Board
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing.
Initial Steps:

- AHCMC meets with Planning Board staff to develop process for inclusion of cultural facilities discussion in community master planning process.
- Planning Board develops a "mini plan" for cultural facilities locations.

2.11 The appropriate agencies should receive funding and be encouraged to preserve, stabilize and eventually renovate historic sites owned by the County.

We heard during our interviews and public forums that County-owned historic sites are being neglected. These are resources that cannot be replaced once lost. Additional funding should be allocated to stabilize sites that are deteriorating until plans can be made for renovation and possibly reuse.

Lead Agencies: Historic Preservation Office and Commission
Montgomery County Historical Society
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing.
Initial Steps:

- Historic Preservation Office and AHCMC convene group of organizations to develop a prioritized list of facilities.
- Develop ongoing CIP submissions.

2.12 The County should approve the Historic Preservation Office's request for funding for grant funding and loans that would be used to restore historic sites not owned by the County.

The Historic Preservation Office currently administers a very small grant and loan program for historic renovations. Consideration should be given to increasing these resources.

Lead Agencies: County Executive and County Council
Historic Preservation Office
AHCMC

Timeline: FY 2003 and ongoing.

Initial Steps:

- Convene group of stakeholders to assess potential requests.
- Historic Preservation Office annually review needs and create County budget request.
- AHCMC provide advocacy support for these requests.

---

3. Ethnic Diversity: FINDINGS

These voices from a recent PBS special speak to the cultural diversity of our 21st century American society. These individuals could live in almost any community of our great nation. We are distinguished from and united with them by our differences and similarities according to gender, age, language, culture, race, sexual identity, and income level—just to name a few. Such diversity challenges our intellect and emotions as we learn to work and live together in harmony.

> *All I know is that I came from North Carolina and happened to move to Pittsburgh, PA, and I'm an American. That's my vision, where people begin to realize that we have nothing else but this.*
>
> -- Ray Henderson

> *We live in West Orange, New Jersey. Basically we're just an all-American family, other than being African-American and Native American.*
>
> -- Monique Perry

> *I have German on my father's side and Irish on my mother's. It was quite an interesting marriage, a German and an Irish person. Then, on my mother's side, my grandfather was an American Indian.*
>
> -- Debbie Burtle

> *My padrino, Cleofes Vigil, used to be asked all the time how long he had been in this country. And Cleofes would look at them very pensively and say, "I can take you to my grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave and to his grandfather's grave. That's how long I've been in this country." I think our family goes back to 1598, to the settlement and conquest of New Mexico.*
>
> -- Vicente Martinez

> *Each person's map of the world is as unique as the person's thumbprint. There are no two people alike. No two people who understand the same sentence the same way… So in dealing with people, you try not to fit them to your concept of what they should be.*
>
> -- Milton Erickson

In a recent speech, *Social Contract for the Year 2000: Diversity as an Asset,* former U.S. Secretary of Housing & Urban Development Henry G. Cisneros eloquently communicated the importance of our collective need to recognize, celebrate and embrace our diversity. "The decisive questions in America's civic and democratic future are those concerning whether it will be truly possible to incorporate ideas of multicultural inclusiveness into our institutions and our decision-making structures. Among the most critical of these questions, the most controversial and the most difficult are these: What will it mean to be an American in the 21st century? Who indeed are the Americans? What

are the core beliefs and social bonds to which one must adhere in order to be American? What are the essential elements of a social accord that would allow people who are characterized by profound differences to function as a society and to prosper and share leadership in a global setting?"

Any society needs to achieve essential conditions of accord, to agree to a minimal social contract so that its members can work cooperatively, engage in a positive dialogue, and decide national directions.

As we extend respect to diverse cultural heritages in school curricula and in the arts, the question of whether there is a minimum core of ideas that constitute the American idea begs for an answer. As we begin to hear languages from areas of the world that have not been part of the local cultural superstructure, we must find ways to engage in a new civic discourse. As fewer of our fellow citizens look like "real Americans," we will have to adapt our images and learn to feel less threatened by the different faces and the different voices.

Meeting the Needs of Culturally Diverse Organizations in Montgomery County

During the meetings and interviews conducted for this study, four major goals were identified related to recognizing cultural diversity and fostering arts development in Montgomery County. These were to:

- Identify and support the increasing number of cultural organizations that preserve the arts, humanities and cultural traditions of the changing population in the county and the individual artists and scholars who create work based in these cultures.
- Expose the community-at-large to the rich cultural heritage of the diverse population in the county.
- Encourage major institutions to expand their marketing and programming to reflect the changing population in the county.
- Teach young people about the importance of diversity through arts, cultural and humanities programming in schools, community-based programming, exhibitions and outreach programs.

How the cultural system in Montgomery County meets the needs of a diverse community is closely tied to the ability of culturally diverse organizations to access funding and technical support. In most cases, this is a role best handled by the Arts and Humanities Council. In some cases, certain roles that the County, through the Arts and Humanities Council, might fulfill could be provided by other entities or through partnerships and joint venturing with other community service agencies. For example, if the Arts and Humanities Council's role is to provide technical assistance to diverse cultural programs, partnerships with other County agencies could help facilitate that goal. The Montgomery County government is making a dramatic and important statement about its commitment to ethnic diversity with the opening of the Charles W. Gilchrist Multi-cultural Center this

coming August. The center will provide direct County services to culturally diverse individuals and groups, including a new Americans welcome area, classes and an information and referral service, a small business development office, and a cultural exchange and education component.

The Arts and Humanities Council, for its part, can serve as a catalyst for public participation in the arts. Its community arts development efforts should engage people in arts, culture and heritage preservation programs specific to their cultural origins. Providing opportunities for people to experience the arts in their geographic neighborhoods and ethnic communities ultimately connects that experience to the larger system of support for the arts.

Identifying Culturally Specific Artists, Scholars and Cultural Organizations

As noted earlier, Montgomery County is quite diverse in the many cultures and ethnicities represented in its population, with more than a quarter of its citizens being of African-American, Asian or Hispanic origin. Perhaps more importantly, these segments of population are growing. From 1990 to 2000, there has been an increase of 85% in the Hispanic population and 60% in the Asian population. It is critical that development of the arts and humanities in the region begin to reflect all of the cultures of Montgomery County's residents.

The identification, development and promotion of culturally specific artists, scholars and organizations that represent diverse cultural traditions is essential to the creation of a mature cultural system. Involving these groups adds value to the education system, civic awareness and political process.

Within the current cultural life of Montgomery County, there are a growing number of different ethnic communities that present their particular artistic expression and aesthetic. By all accounts, this growth in the immigrant and culturally specific populations will continue to make a significant impact on cultural offerings in the area. Many groups come together to celebrate traditional holidays and festivals, some in public outdoor spaces with the help of the Recreation Department. Others hold events at churches, school campuses or in whatever space they can secure.

These events currently are not supported nor recognized as "cultural projects" by the Arts and Humanities Council. Yet, they are mounted under similar circumstances and face the same issues as do events sponsored by the "recognized" small and mid-sized organizations in the county. The "projects" exist without facilities and the institutional framework that could offer opportunities to stimulate new cultural expression.

Beyond these limitations, the artists, projects and organizations that do arise from culturally specific communities are not well known outside their own communities. As a result, the tremendous resource represented by these groups is excluded, by default, from

the cultural and educational system. Also, other cultural organizations are deprived of opportunities to expand their programs to appeal to a broader, culturally diverse audience.

Nurturing Culturally Specific Artists, Scholars and Cultural Organizations

In order to nurture the development and strengthening of emerging, culturally specific artists, scholars and organizations, a variety of elements must be in place. The following represents the range of issues and concerns voiced during this study around this topic.

- When talking about small and culturally specific programs and organizations, respondents complained repeatedly, throughout the assessment phase of this plan that they "didn't know what is out there." At the same time, the cultural organizations complained that they had no visibility and connection to the rest of the cultural delivery system. The simple act of maintaining a directory of artists, cultural organizations, humanities groups and other resources could be a powerful tool for creating new opportunities and linkages. This would be especially true if the directory could be put on a website, allowing instant access to the information. An electronic directory would have the additional advantage of being easily updated by the organizations listed on it and readily updated when new organizations are identified.
  - Many of those interviewed cited the arts and humanities as key resources in addressing community issues. The Arts and Humanities Council was cited as being in a unique position to initiate partnerships with other city, county and private agencies to create positive responses to such community issues as:
    - Crime prevention;
    - Local neighborhood preservation and vitality;
    - Education;
    - Employment for young people;
    - Cultural tourism;
    - Leisure activities for youth;
    - Higher standards of cultural programs;
    - More collaborations between cultural and humanities organizations; and
    - More private funding for the arts.
  - The need for exhibition and performance space was a common theme throughout this planning process. For smaller and culturally specific artists and organizations, this issue is even more profound. Lack of exhibition space creates more barriers to the visibility of culturally diverse projects.
  - Lack of office spaces and administrative support resources create barriers for the growth of culturally diverse organizations. Many operate from the founder's spare bedroom and rely on the local copy shop for services such as copying and faxing.
  - Smaller and medium-sized groups, including culturally specific "projects" that produce and present throughout the year, expressed a need for management and technical support services. Many are unsure how to create and run a formal

nonprofit organization or how to make their organization known to the larger public.

- Accessing either funding from the Arts and Humanities Council or from the County's Facilities Improvement Program is prohibitive because of the restrictive criteria. A large group of organizations, even those who were not identified as "culturally specific," are not even aware of the resources available and lack the capacity to navigate through the county system to identify a point of entry.
- Another major factor associated with inclusiveness and nurturing of culturally specific artists involves the larger institutions. During the interview process, the issue of diversity elicited both an embracing stance and a defensive one. Many groups agree that broadening and diversifying their audiences is a goal they would like to achieve. Others noted that on the programming side, they present some programs that feature artists of color, or they partner with a culturally specific organization to augment their season of offerings to the public. In all cases, these efforts are valuable and important. However, one-time events may or may not reflect an embedded commitment to diversity throughout an organization.

On an even broader level, the Arts and Humanities Council has the added responsibility as the County's agent for distributing and monitoring public funds that support art and culture. Certainly no one wants "the bureaucracy" to mandate inclusiveness. It is incumbent, then, on the Arts and Humanities Council and its Board of Directors to establish policies and funding programs that can encourage and support the development of significant initiatives. These should be designed to assist the major institutions in planning for more inclusive programs, audiences, and the development of a broader volunteer and donor base.

Major cultural institutions, as a rule, are involved in cyclical planning and development modes. Earned income, fund development, restructuring, leadership, etc., are only a few of the topics that organizations will engage professional outside expertise to work on with board and staff members for the purpose of identifying short-term strategies to reach long-term goals. Diversity initiatives in the areas of audience development, marketing, programming, and human resource development, are often relegated to a category labeled "outreach." While outreach is very important, it does not fully address the need for thoughtful planning to ensure that public funding serves the community as a whole.

In addition to directing its attention to promoting inclusiveness in cultural organizations within the county, AHCMC should make special efforts over the coming years to create a more diverse staff and Board and should ensure that its services and grant guidelines are designed to be inclusive of all cultural groups. It will be difficult for the Arts and Humanities Council to develop policy recommendations around the issue of cultural diversity unless AHCMC itself is diverse. Whenever new hiring opportunities come along at AHCMC, efforts should be made to recruit from diverse communities.

---

3. Ethnic Diversity: RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In all aspects of its work, the Arts and Humanities Council should assume a role in creating collaborations and partnerships that will promote the role and visibility of emerging and culturally specific organizations, as well as history and humanities organizations.

Partnerships and special initiatives are labor intensive, but have a tremendous yield for a community. The Arts and Humanities Council should act as a catalyst and initiator of partnerships that seek to assist both the cultural community and civic and nonprofit organizations within Montgomery County in meeting the needs of county residents. Many of these partnerships will target traditionally under-served neighborhoods, low to moderate-income families, new immigrant families, young people, seniors and individuals with physical or developmental handicaps. These partnerships will require relationship building and may not be fully implemented for three to four years, but the potential for new sources of funding is encouraging. A few of these potential partners include area YMCA's and YWCA's, the Department of Commerce and the Department of Justice; Boys and Girls Clubs; HUD; and County agencies serving specific geographic areas.

Cultural/community partnerships are usually developed to meet specific needs. The following short list of potential partnerships would employ artists, promote youth involvement and encourage heritage preservation.

Neighborhood Arts Teams involve teams of artists in neighborhood improvement projects, after-school programs for young people, innovative safety programs, inter-generational programs with child care at senior centers, mentoring/apprentice programs that match youth offenders with artists, etc.

Youth Entrepreneurial Projects establish enterprise opportunities for young people in arts industry-related skill development projects, e.g., docent training programs, usher/theater hosts, public art conservation projects, revitalization projects, such as murals, repainting public trash receptacles, art works in public transit stations, etc.

Leadership Development involves teens as trustees or on a youth advisory committee for area cultural and humanities institutions to work with mentor trustees and executive staff.

Artist Residency Programs encourage artists to work on site in community settings to teach, conduct workshops and exhibit or perform in a non-traditional setting for at least four to six months.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY2003 and ongoing

Initial Steps:

- AHCMC staff meet with community service organizations to establish potentials for collaborative programs
- AHCMC identify feasible programs and join with service organizations to seek grants to fund new programs

---

3.2 As described in the section on funding, incentive grants above the base formula funding should be awarded to organizations that develop partnerships with emerging artists and culturally specific groups.

Incentive funding to encourage partnerships between arts and humanities organizations could help initiate programs that would benefit the established organizations in reaching new audiences and engaging artists from a broad spectrum of cultural backgrounds. The benefit to the emerging artists and culturally specific organizations would be increased exposure and access to larger audiences, as well as technical assistance and mentoring.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY2002
Initial Steps:

- Develop funding guidelines for FY2003.
- Create opportunities for organizations to share resources about successful collaborations.

3.3 The cultural institutions in Montgomery County must embrace the concept of cultural diversity by embedding a commitment to diversity throughout their organizations, with support and assistance from the Arts and Humanities Council.

The Arts and Humanities Council should engage in a planning process to discover ways it might serve as a stronger resource to the larger cultural institutions in the area of diversity. However, it would be presumptuous to outline strategies for the organizations themselves without first having a plan for AHCMC that outlines goals and timelines set by the Board. The following are possible approaches that AHCMC might take:

- *Audit current diversity initiatives:* The Arts and Humanities Council could review its funding programs to determine if they create barriers for larger institutions seeking to broaden their programs, or barriers to emerging and community-based culturally specific organizations whose management structures do not fit the Council's eligibility requirements.
- *Set general objectives:* The Arts and Humanities Council could develop a commitment statement that outlines AHCMC's goals for diversity. The County and the cultural institutions -- their boards, staffs and other volunteers, should be involved in the development of this commitment statement. The organizational commitment

should be discussed before launching any new initiatives, and all aspects of the AHCMC's work should be sensitive to the commitment.

- *Consult stakeholders:* The Arts and Humanities Council should be prepared to educate, and to be educated by, the different constituents they serve. That may include prospective new corporate donors, the cultural community, colleagues and partners within the county, arts organizations and other service agencies like the Collaboration Council, United Way, etc.
- *Develop consistent messages:* The Arts and Humanities Council should communicate with constituent groups, grantees, elected officials, etc., about their commitment to diversity. It also will be important to be honest with grantees about the Board's commitment and how that might affect funding through AHCMC.
- *Engage constituent organizations:* The Board and staff of the Arts and Humanities Council should move forward with planning to ensure greater access to public funds and services by culturally-diverse groups. However, some well-established organizations may be resistant to change. In any case, care must be taken to engage constituent groups in an ongoing dialogue that can result in increased public participation in the arts in Montgomery County.
- *Agency action plan and budget requirements:* As with any new initiative, a commitment to inclusiveness and diversity will require new resources. The Board of the Arts and Humanities Council will need to consider cost/benefit analyses of management assistance, new funding programs and staff time needed for new initiatives. A specific plan and budget will ensure that follow-through can be achieved in support of AHCMC's commitment to diversity.

Lead Agencies: AHCMC
Representatives of arts and humanities organizations
Timeline: FY2002 - 03
Initial Steps:

- Convene advisory group that includes AHCMC Board members and representatives of arts and humanities organizations.
- Begin developing policy on diversity and strategies for implementing the policy.

---

4. Arts and Cultural Education: FINDINGS

Arts and Cultural Education Makes a Difference

> *"The arts can play a vital role in learning how to learn, an essential ability for fostering achievement and growth throughout children's lives."*
>
> -- Richard Riley
> Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning, published in early 2000 by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, documents the work of seven nationally recognized, independent university research teams investigating the impact of arts education on learning and student success. The nationwide research project, undertaken through a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the U.S. Department of Education, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Council of Chief State School Officers, leaves no doubt that "if we are to equip young people for professionally and personally rewarding careers, we must give them greatly enriched experiences [through the arts and humanities.]"

"Learning in and Through the Arts" (LITA) and other *Champions of Change* studies found much evidence that learning in the arts has significant effects on learning in other domains. LITA suggests a dynamic model in which learning in one domain supports and stimulates learning in others, which in turn supports and stimulates learning in a complex web of influence described as a "constellation." LITA and other researchers provide compelling evidence that student achievement is heightened in an environment with high-quality arts education offerings and a school climate supportive of active and productive learning.

The following are additional *Champions of Change* highlights:

- Data from the College Entrance Examination Board show that students who take four years or more of arts and music classes in high school score an average of 83 points better on their SATs than students who take only one-half year or less.
- Research analysis of 25,000 students from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey revealed that involvement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, more community service and lower school dropout rates. Students, regardless of their socio-economic status, reap cognitive and developmental benefits from arts involvement. In addition, the data show that high arts participation makes a significant difference to students from low-income backgrounds.
- There was clear evidence that sustained involvement in particular art forms, i.e., music and theater, is highly correlated with success in mathematics and reading.
- Arts programs for youth decrease involvement in delinquent behavior, increase academic achievement and improve youth's attitudes about themselves and their

future. Art and art-making encourage and often require behaviors that are positive in family, school, and community settings. Cooperation, respect, sharing, and also trust, altruism, and competence for the task at hand -- these are skills and behaviors nurtured by work in art. The Youth ARTS Development Project research, funded by the federal Department of Justice, discovered that arts participation by young people resulted in the following:

- *Skills:* An increased ability to express anger in a constructive way and increased ability to work on tasks from start to finish;
- *Attitudes and Behavior:* A decreased frequency of delinquent behavior and improved attitudes toward school; and
- *Court involvement*: Fewer new court referrals and less severe new offenses.

Arts education exists in the dual universe of the public school and the community, each with its own unique challenges and opportunities. There is an extraordinary story to be told about the value of arts education. These messages must be told and retold throughout the community.

Montgomery County Schools: A Brief Profile

Montgomery County has a highly-regarded public school system. Public school system enrollment has increased in recent years at a five percent annual rate in response to the rapid pace of population growth in the county, especially among ethnically diverse populations. This is having a significant effect on schools as well as in the community. The school system's population is the most ethnically diverse in its history; five of every 10 students are classified as African-American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American. The school system also reports that students come from as many as 138 foreign countries, with 119 different languages spoken at home.

Many students come from families of modest means with one in four public school students eligible for FARMS (free and reduced-priced meal service.) Local sources, most notably property tax and income tax revenues, make up 85% of the school budgets in Montgomery County. Only one in four taxpayers in Montgomery County has a child in public school, yet the public school budget represents over 50% of the total County operating budget. There is tremendous pressure on the school system from the general community to raise the academic bar for all students and close the achievement gap between Caucasian and Asian students, and other ethnic groups, especially in the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), and the Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT) in reading and mathematics.

Arts and Cultural Education in Montgomery County Schools

Based on growing awareness of the impact of arts education on student success and the State of Maryland's commitment to providing arts education as an essential part of a child's education, the availability of arts education for all students is a major concern for the county school system.

In Montgomery County schools, arts education currently is at reduced levels from that enjoyed prior to the recession of the early 1990s. At that time, school funding shortages resulted in significant cutbacks to school budgets and most notably to arts education programs and activities. Art and music teachers were laid off. System-wide arts coordinator positions were reduced. The irony is that, when the economy recovered, the school system did not restore funding for arts and humanities education. Rather, the focus seems to have shifted to an emphasis on basic skills and improvement on standardized tests.

As recently as 1995, the State of Maryland made a commitment to high standards of accountability in education that recognized the need for high quality arts education as an essential part of a child's education. This statewide goal was articulated as:

> *"By the year 2000, 100 percent of Maryland's students will participate in fine arts programs that enable them to meet the content and achievement standards established by State standards for the arts."*

To assist school systems like Montgomery County with implementing this goal, the State Board of Education appointed a Fine Arts Standards Task Force and an Education Advisory Panel to develop standards for program evaluation and a plan for implementing programs in the schools. The State Board of Education subsequently approved content and achievement standards, known as Essential Learner Outcomes (ELOs), for dance, music, theater and visual arts programs in public schools. In FY98 and FY99, Fine Arts Grants Programs were initiated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to help school districts to revise curriculum, promote collaborative program development across jurisdictions, undertake professional development initiatives, and address deficits in specific arts fields such as dance and theater. Additional funding was distributed in FY00 for implementation by local school systems, with another $1.3 million enhancement to the FY01 base budget of $1.9 million.

It is within this context of a strong state policy and increased opportunities for arts education that a paradox emerges in Montgomery County. The school system has long enjoyed a national reputation for delivery of high-quality, sequential instruction in the arts, as well as arts integrated across the curriculum, but in recent years these programs have received cutbacks in support. Today these programs do not exist across the county for every student and many disciplines are largely under-represented.

Also, there currently is no master plan for reintegration of arts into the curriculum, despite the state arts education initiative. Further, schools are not taking full advantage of opportunities to build sustained relationships with community-based arts and humanities organizations to provide additional arts and humanities enrichment for students. Many school districts have experienced a gradual erosion of their support system for arts education. Similarly, Montgomery County finds itself regrouping to meet new challenges with fewer financial and human resources available to do so.

Arts Education in the Community

Montgomery County has a high concentration of visual arts, music, performing arts and other organizations that deliver a wide variety of quality arts education programs for adults and children. These programs take place as part of school activities, after-school programs, on weekends and throughout the summer. They occur in nonprofit settings, in schools, in private studios, through the Montgomery County Recreation Department, and in unique park settings. The following is a partial listing of the arts education programs that are available through the nonprofit sector in Montgomery County. These programs have grown in response to an enormous public interest in the arts. Although this is not a complete list, some of the local community-based arts education resources are listed below:

- Glen Echo Park, under the auspices of the National Park Service, offers year-round community activities in dance, theater and the arts, along with concerts, demonstrations, workshops and festivals that are part of the Chautauqua Summer season. The park also administers an artist-in-residency program allowing the public to see artists at work, and is host to the Yellow Barn Studio & Gallery, offering classes and support for emerging artists.
- Adventure Theatre, located in Glen Echo Park, is approaching its 50th year of continuous operation. It offers year-round classes in the dramatic arts for children and adults. Adventure Theatre presents plays from both the classical and new children's literature and, on weekdays, offers educational shows that can be seen at the theatre for field trips or booked for touring to schools.
- The County Recreation Department is directly involved in the delivery of arts services through classes and workshops in community centers and other locations throughout the county. These classes typically are inexpensive compared to privately-provided classes and are available in many locations where residents may have no other sources for such classes. The Department offers classes and workshops in music, dance, drama, visual arts and crafts. Over 7,300 residents each year participate in these programs. The Recreation Department also coordinates an annual Youth Art Exhibit.
- Round House Theatre, an equity theatre company, offers classes throughout the year for all age groups from preschoolers to evening acting classes for adults to Youth Onstage, a teen touring company. Round House also offers in-school arts education programming for students and curriculum guides for teachers.
- Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts (BAPA) offers young people ages three to 18 and their families experiences in the performing arts through classes, performance opportunities and as audiences at their professional stage. In partnership with American University, BAPA's Imagination Quest (IQ) in-school program promotes the effectiveness of teachers, parental involvement and student achievement by using theatrical techniques, resources and lesson plans to teach academic subjects. BAPA's Deaf Access Program serves the deaf community, ages 3 - 18, except for disabled actors who may be older.

- The Musical Theater Center (MTC) offers classes in voice, acting and dance to young people and adults, serving more than 1,200 students a year. They also offer summer camp programs that consist of classes and performances. Instruction in musical theater also is accomplished through the production of fully-staged musicals featuring students in grades 3 - 12.
- At the core of the Olney Theatre Center Education Program is the infusion of the arts with the humanities for the greater enrichment of both. Olney strives to "integrate the artistic programs and the creative process of the theatre into the school's core curriculum for systemic and sustained impact on the learning process." The Theatre has received a $300,000 grant from the Maryland State Department of Education to offer theatre programs that meet the State Essential Learner Outcomes to all counties in the state.
- The Jewish Community Center's Cultural Arts Division offers a rich and eclectic series of arts education programs for children and adults of all ages, including people with disabilities and older adults. The intergenerational workshop "Kids and Adults Together" brings children grades K - 3 together with parents, grandparents and/or caregivers to explore the world through the making of Mexican piñatas, African masks and Israeli mosaics. Dance offerings include ballet, modern dance, contemporary folk dancing, jazz, tap, hip-hop and fundamentals of choreography.
- Rockville Arts Place (RAP) offers painting and drawing classes, ceramics, and photography programs for adults and young people. RAP also offers a Portfolio Development class for high school students and a Young Artists Workshop for children ages 11-15. RAP also offers programs affiliated with the Corcoran College of Art and Design.
- Montgomery College has three art departments at each of its campuses in Rockville, Takoma Park and Germantown. At Rockville alone, there are 1,700 students enrolled in art classes taught by almost 50 full-time and part-time faculty each semester. The Takoma Park campus is affiliated with the American Film Institute for educational programs. The College has inaugurated a Montgomery College Institute of the Arts to be an overarching organization to promote all of the arts and humanities. Recent plans call for the College to be the successor institution in a merger with the Maryland College of Art and Design.
- The county's historical and humanities organizations offer education programs for the community. Many of these organizations engage in partnerships with the schools that help meet the State Essential Learner Outcomes in history and social studies.
  - The Montgomery Historical Society provides programs on state and local history, including a tour of Beall-Dawson House with pre- and post-visit activities, reaching 3,500 fourth graders annually. The Historical Society conducts walking tours and house visits that impact approximately 700 students. An Underground Railroad kit has been developed to augment in-school activities, including original documents and research. Over 600 middle and high school students participate in the National History Day Competition

with projects, exhibits, papers, documentaries, drama works, and other activities based on original research. The Society's school coordinator works closely with area and curriculum supervisors on programs and workshops for teachers, and is working on a textbook.
  - Additional equally impressive humanities education activities are provided by the Gaithersburg History Alliance, Historic Medley, Sandy Spring Museum and the National Capital Trolley Museum.
- The Levine School of Music's Montgomery County branch offers a wide variety of public performances and classes for adults and children including private instrumental and vocal instruction, music theory, history and composition classes; certification programs; and orchestra, jazz, choral and band ensembles. Classes serve toddlers through senior citizens, at all skill levels from the beginner to the professional. The Levine School will be one of the tenants of the education center at the Strathmore concert hall.
- The Paul Peck Humanities Institute at Montgomery College is affiliated with the Smithsonian Museum. Together they present seminars, lectures, panel discussions, films, exhibits and other events in the county.

Most of these arts and humanities groups reported that the demand for their programs is growing beyond their capacity to deliver them. This is largely due to facilities constraints including size and location among other factors. All groups reported that there are large segments of the population that they are not currently reaching, both in terms of geographic location and culturally diverse populations. Many groups indicated they are not prepared to target these new markets, especially where language and culture are barriers. New marketing strategies will be needed to reach these communities. Most cultural groups report the greatest challenges to fully reaching the community include achieving equity, accessibility and affordability of programs.

Common Concerns about the Future of Arts and Cultural Education

The school system and cultural community share common concerns about the state of arts education in Montgomery County. There is a strong will and desire to create more productive partnerships. Both acknowledge a need for greater dialogue to better understand the pressures and challenges each is facing and to develop a plan to work together to accomplish mutual goals. There also is an agreed-upon urgent need to develop grassroots support for K - 12 arts education. This was particularly important as there was a perceived lack of a broad-based understanding of the value and importance of arts education to the lives of children as reflected in the policies instituted in the schools over the past several years.

Arts and humanities organizations report difficulties in reaching under-served segments of the community. Across-the-board, this has been a major concern of both school personnel and the cultural community. The challenges cited by interviewees in reaching this population stem from a number of factors beyond the control of either schools or arts

groups. These communities tend to have less disposable income for workshop or lab fees, less ability to make time available for other-than-income-producing activities, limited access to transportation, and limited access to information about opportunities available to them.

Most cultural groups, as well as schools, reported difficulties in attracting press to write about their programs. There is not the level of attention from the local media that there needs to be. While Montgomery County is situated in an extremely competitive media market, editorial staffs of the media serving the county need to become more sensitive to arts education issues and to covering programs occurring here.

Lack of general public awareness of the value of arts education was a common frustration. While Montgomery County is recognized as a growing, more affluent population, with higher incomes and a higher level of advanced education than its counterparts, there is still the frustration that the general community does not value and support the arts as strongly as this demographic would suggest. This is especially true with arts education in the schools where it is perceived that most communities value their sports programs and their test scores more than their arts programs.

There is a general lack of awareness or understanding of the cultural resources present in the county for arts education. Arts and humanities organization leaders recognize that they are not as aware of the programs and opportunities present in their communities as they might be. School leaders also think that they are not fully aware of the cultural resources that are available to them. There exists a great desire for more networking and ongoing communication on the part of both school leaders and cultural organization leaders.

Arts and humanities organizations and schools articulated the need to build partnerships and program expansion that can link artists and teachers. The difficulties in accomplishing this, of course, begin with managing human, financial and time resources. Educators expressed an interest in having more in-depth relationships with cultural groups in the community, rather than one-time experiences or activities. Teachers who were able to achieve stronger, sustained relationships reported stronger support of the curriculum and linkages to curriculum goals.

---

4. Arts and Cultural Education: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), in consultation with the AHCMC, Montgomery College and other nonprofit groups, should develop the five-year plan required by the State of Maryland to enable students in grades K-12:

- **To achieve state standards in the arts, at a minimum, and**
- **To ensure a suitable distribution of resources to all students in all schools.**

This plan should be prepared in conjunction with the development of a comprehensive, community-based plan for cultural education for all the citizens of Montgomery County, as discussed in Recommendation 4.3.

The state's Goals 2000 program has established standards for achievement in the arts and has required each school system in the state to develop a plan in order to be eligible for funding. MCPS has not yet developed that plan. When completed, this plan will unlock state resources and could be an important guide to further local government support of arts education programs in the public schools. There are several opportunities occurring in Montgomery County that suggest the time is right to pursue this effort. Montgomery County's new school superintendent, Dr. Jerry Weast, has indicated a desire to redevelop the cultural education programs in the public schools.

Through a new federal emphasis on after-school programs, MCPS is embarking on a middle-school initiative to provide activities and programs for students. Staff has been put in place (Middle School After School Coordinators), and there has been movement to incorporate the arts into this effort. In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education Essential Learner Outcomes (ELOs) for the fine arts that are driving the curriculum revision process in school districts across the state, provide a framework for arts groups to establish in-depth partnerships with the schools. A mechanism that would assist educators and cultural groups in collectively addressing the ELOs would support both the curriculum revision process going on in the schools, as well as the development of programs and curriculum guide materials by the cultural groups. More in-depth dialogue between the schools and the arts groups also would help ensure that both high artistic quality and educational expectations are met through these programs. The state's and the local schools' emphasis on workforce development also presents an avenue for partnering with cultural groups in internships, and for discussing the impact of the arts as a career and in industry-related jobs.

Lead Agency: MCPS
Timeline: FY2002 - 04
Initial Steps:

- Identify budget and staff resources needed to develop the plan.
- Inventory existing cultural programs in schools and available to schools.
- Convene steering committee to guide the planning process including representatives from the cultural community, AHCMC, Montgomery College and MCPS.

4.2 The Montgomery County Public Schools should build the capacity of the school system to restore arts education programming, create partnerships and meet state standards.

With the emphasis being placed on systemic standards-based reform at the state and county levels and with state-level assessment in the arts on the horizon, consideration should be given to increasing the number of arts coordinators at the MCPS Central Office. Presently, there are four Arts Coordinators, servicing a school system that has experienced a 44% increase in student population. There are no full-time theatre arts and dance curriculum coordinators, a deficiency noted in the Fine Arts Program Review Site Visit Report conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education in May, 1999.

During the period when MCPS was most recognized for its innovative programs in the arts, there were seven Arts Coordinators assigned to serve the school system: three in music, two in visual art, one in theatre/TV, and one in interrelated arts. The arts coordinators served under the Director of the Department of Aesthetic Education. They now serve under the Director of the Department of Physical Education and Aesthetic Education.

Partnerships are a necessary means by which to achieve the enormous challenges confronting education. However, partnerships are labor intensive. In order to accomplish this goal, consideration should be given to added staffing at the county level both at the Arts and Humanities Council and at the central office of the MCPS.

Lead Agency: MCPS
Timeline: FY2003 - 06
Initial Steps:

- Begin developing budget requests for new positions.
- Meet with cultural community to begin public awareness campaign.

4.3 The AHCMC should establish an arts education planning and advocacy function within its own operation to:

- Promote community development and support for arts education among emerging and diverse communities;
- Promote the value of the arts and humanities in educational settings;
- Generate positive publicity about the role of the arts in education;
- Build a communications network among the cultural community, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the general public;
- Create partnerships that will promote arts education in Montgomery County; and
- Develop a comprehensive, community-based plan for cultural education in Montgomery County in conjunction with the MCPS five-year plan.

Many individuals interviewed expressed concern that there has not been a unified advocacy effort in support of arts education in the county. Many feel that cutbacks within the school system and the current lack of emphasis on arts education as necessary to a complete education are symptomatic of the need to raise community awareness. Though many groups advocate for the arts in various ways, a concerted, organized message would be able to target decision makers and help create a vision for arts education that would support both programs in the schools, as well as those which take place in the community.

A community-based comprehensive plan would assess the needs and demand for cultural education in the county both in the schools and in the community. The in-school assessment would need to be coordinated with the school system's five-year planning process. The plan must include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- A complete inventory of cultural programs both in-school and in the community;
- Strategic recommendations for strengthening cultural education in the schools;
- Strategic recommendations for strengthening cultural education in the community;
- Strategic recommendations to market programs by local cultural organizations to the schools and to non-English speaking and under-served populations; and
- Clear, specific and achievable implementation steps and advocacy strategies.

Such a plan would help to define the community's vision and core values with regard to arts education; help connect community arts programs with the educational goals of the school system; and present a strategy to galvanize community resources in support of arts and humanities education.

In addition, the development of an online Clearinghouse for Information on Arts Education programs, in-school offerings, family programming, and classes for children and adults was a recurring idea throughout the interviews. Given the size and growing population of the county, and the expense of the media markets, marketing has become a significant issue, especially with respect to reaching new segments of the population. Schools report difficulty in identifying and partnering with cultural resources. There also is an influx of new teachers into the system who do not have as much familiarity with the community and with grant and program opportunities as do the veterans. There is a general sense of an inability to access "what's out there."

For the general community, the online clearinghouse would provide access to the number and scope of programs available community-wide in after-school and weekend classes and events. For the schools, an online clearinghouse could serve a larger function in addition to providing listings of activities. Access to descriptions of activities, sample study guide material, scholarships available, and video clips of performances or lessons would create a marketplace generating greater awareness among principals and educators of the scope and variety of programs and services available to them. Ideally, either independent website links or direct two-way interactive electronic dialogue would be a

component of the clearinghouse to facilitate direct communication between school personnel and cultural groups. Several arts groups expressed a need to identify new teaching artists. Sharing of lists and recommendations seems to lean toward word of mouth and other informal methods. Addressing ways in which individual artists can be linked into community education programs through arts groups also could be a valuable function of the clearinghouse.

To address the need for advocacy, communication and coordination of existing arts education resources, there must be dedicated staff working in the area of arts education at the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Given the scope of the challenges presented, as well as the opportunities for participation in the evolving state and county education reform movement, it is recommended that, at minimum, the Arts and Humanities Council establish a Program Director position for arts education policy and programs to oversee the development of an arts education division. The design of the staff positions and program components should take into consideration the following areas of need: advocacy and public awareness of cultural education, grants to schools, artists and cultural organizations for technical assistance, county-wide coordination activities, communication, and networking.

A Program Director position is essential to provide both the school system and the cultural community with a central point person capable of nurturing collaborations between the school and cultural communities. The Program Director would serve as liaison to the community at large, as well as assist the Arts and Humanities Council leadership in identifying issues, trends and opportunities for partnerships. In developing an education division, the Program Director would need to focus his/her attention on policy and planning issues, and on building relationships between and among the school and cultural communities. There is no evidence gathered in this planning process that the Arts and Humanities Council should consider engaging in direct programming to schools and the community. The nonprofit, County government and private entities already engaging in these efforts provide a substantial number of quality programs. There is, however, a lack of coordination and facilitation among the available resources that should be addressed by the Arts and Humanities Council.

Eventually, in order to be most effective, this position would be supported by two program assistants, one focused in the coordination of grants and technical assistance programs, the other centered in supporting the communications networks, advocacy and community outreach. While these support positions will not be available in the early years, as the program grows and achieves success, it should be possible to expand staffing.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY2002 - 05
Initial Steps:

- Identify resources for arts education funding and arts education plan.
- Select and convene a committee to develop advocacy strategy.

- Convene steering committee to begin development of plan.
- Meet with county Chamber of Commerce's education committee to establish community linkages.

4.4 The County and the Montgomery County Board of Education should support the AHCMC in establishing its arts education planning and advocacy function.

The consultants were able to meet with an extremely varied and broad-based cross-section of education leaders and activists, teachers, artists, arts administrators, and parents. The willingness of the participants to respond and lend their creativity and ideas to this process speaks to the enormous potential within Montgomery County to create a vision for arts education in the community that once again sets the national standard. There are, however, constituencies who should be involved in this process in a meaningful way who were not involved at this stage due to limitations of time and/or availability, including institutes for higher education and the social service community.

It is clear that, with the change in administration in the Montgomery County Public Schools, there is a tremendous opportunity to embark on a large-scale community discussion about arts education in Montgomery County both within the pre-K through 12 public school system and throughout the community.

The timing for a large-scale plan for arts education could not be better. Montgomery County Public Schools is embarking on a long-range planning process to reform public education. The MCPS administration has offered to dovetail this work with the Arts and Humanities Council so as to engage the community in the broadest sense in the education dialogue. Involvement of the Arts and Humanities Council and its constituencies in this venture would bring additional voices for arts education and additional political clout. The system has appointed Community Superintendents to oversee the new initiatives in math, reading comprehension, and language arts, along with reform in general. Focus groups on the arts could be set up in conjunction with community forums hosted by the school system. This process directly ties the arts in with the Board of Education's third Goal and Academic Priority:

> *"Goal 3. Strengthen Productive Partnerships for Education. Secure the commitment of the entire community to maintain quality education in Montgomery County by building partnerships among families, the community, business and staff that promote and support initiatives to help all children succeed."*

A more extensive planning process for arts education also should address the critical issue of community commitment and broadening the base of support for arts education. Arts education leaders emphasized the need to connect with underserved areas of the county and with parents and students in culturally diverse communities.

The observations and site visits that were conducted as part of this plan were done in schools whose art programs are clearly superior. Yet, even within these contexts, allusions were made to schools in which arts programs are struggling, opportunities and access are limited, and resources are lacking. These schools and the challenges their communities are confronting need to be brought into the process in order to fully address issues of equity and access to quality programs.

Lead Agencies: MCPS
AHCMC
County Government
Montgomery College

Timeline: FY2003

Initial Steps:

- Identify lead persons from MCPS, AHCMC, County government and Montgomery College who will serve as the key people in the arts education planning process.

---

5. The Humanities: FINDINGS

The Humanities: The Soul of a Society

> *Less than a month before he died, President John F. Kennedy spoke of an America remembered "not for our victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit."*
>
> *American economic, scientific, and technological achievements are fundamentally dependent upon American achievements in mass general education, of which such humanities subjects as English, history, and civics have always comprised a major part.*
>
> Excerpted from *The State of Humanities: Teaching and Learning in America,* a publication of the National Endowment for the Humanities

In every era, the *raison d'etre* for the humanities has been that the study of rhetoric, literature, history, or philosophy would yield more enlightened and engaged citizens. At the core of this study is education--not only learning in school settings but life-long learning through community-based organizations. Humanities study not only occurs within specific disciplines, but also extends to learning about the many aspects of society around us. Humanities activities draw people together to discuss shared values and concerns, inform communities and celebrate our individual and common heritages as a people.

The humanities are those branches of knowledge that concern themselves with human beings and fostering a civil society or with analytic and critical methods of inquiry derived from an appreciation of human values and of the unique ability of the human spirit to express itself. As a group of educational disciplines, the humanities are distinguished in content and method from the physical and biological sciences and, somewhat less decisively, from the social sciences. The humanities include the study of all languages and literatures, the arts, history, and philosophy.

Modern conception of the humanities has its origins in the classical Greek *paideia*, a course of general education dating from the sophists in the mid-fifth century BC, which prepared young men for active citizenship in the polis or city-state; as well as in Cicero's humanitas (literally, "human nature"), a program of training proper for orators, first set forth in *De Oratore* (*Of the Orator*) in 55 BC. In the early Middle Ages, the Church Fathers, including St. Augustine, himself a rhetorician, adapted *paideia* and *humanitas*—or the *bonae* ("good") or *liberales* ("liberal") arts, as they were also called, to a program of basic Christian education. Mathematics, linguistics and philological studies, and some history, philosophy, and science were included.

Historically, the humanistic disciplines have undergone redefinition, whether it be the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and *quadrivium* (geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and music) of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, or the *studia humanitatis* of the Renaissance city-states, or more pertinent to our own era, the Great Books and core curricula of American universities in the 20th century.

Contemporary conceptions of the humanities resemble earlier conceptions in that they propose a complete educational program based on the perpetuation of a system of human values. This definition places the emphasis on citizenship, civic participation and historic preservation. It is this definition that will be used in thinking about the humanities in Montgomery County.

The Status of Humanities Program Delivery in Montgomery County

The most fundamental issues facing public programming in the humanities in Montgomery County are, in most respects, no different from those affecting the arts. The county is sprawling and fragmented; its demographic base is changing rapidly; new and transient inhabitants have little sense of county identity, especially with the powerful metropolitan pull of nearby Washington; there is little or no philanthropic tradition to draw upon at a time when very ambitious plans for new cultural programs and facilities are underway; and public resources devoted to both the arts and humanities have been sparse.

Nonetheless, a broad array of humanities groups is flourishing in the county. These include groups devoted to humanities in general, to literature, and to history. For example, a recent directory of organizations and museums concerned with the heritage of the county includes 47 groups ranging from those devoted to neighborhoods, such as the Lincoln Park Historical Society, to groups devoted to large regions, such as the Germantown Historical Society. It also includes organizations with very specific missions, such as the Friends of Oakley Cabin and the Sandy Spring Slave Museum.

Although not all of the county's humanities organizations can be listed here, some of the larger and better-known ones are described below. Some have been mentioned in earlier chapters, but are included here to portray the variety and strength of humanities programs in the county.

F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference
The F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference celebrates the birthday of this great American author and the art of writing. The conference includes literary workshops and a reading by a well-known author. A short story contest precedes the conference. The sixth annual conference will be held on Saturday, September 22, 2001 at Montgomery College in Rockville.

Friends of the Library
The Friends of the Library, an independent nonprofit organization, supports and promotes the Montgomery County Public Libraries. They undertake such programs as the "Summer Reading Program" for pre-school and school-age children, the "Teen Read" program, the "Born to Read" program for mothers of new babies, the "Reading is Fundamental" program for at-risk children, the "Literary Luncheon" series for adults, as well as many others. In addition, they operate two used bookstores that offer low-cost books and magazines.

Montgomery County Historical Society
The mission of the Montgomery County Historical Society (MCHS) is to preserve, collect, interpret and promote the history of Montgomery County for all county residents. MCHS operates two permanent exhibits—the mid-19th century period rooms in the Beall-Dawson House, and the medical exhibits at the Stonestreet Museum of 19th century medicine. MCHS provides educational programs for both adults and children. Adult programs include lectures, genealogy seminars and a speakers bureau. Children's programs included interactive school tours, history camps and programs on the Underground Railroad. They also have a research library that contains an extensive collection of documents related to Montgomery County history.

National Capital Trolley Museum
The National Capital Trolley Museum, located on Layhill Road in the Northwest Branch Park, preserves and interprets the history of Washington's electric street railway system with a collection of 17 street cars reflecting a variety of designs and technology. A one-mile demonstration railway serves as the Museum's primary interpretative facility. In addition, there is an O-scale model layout representing a Washington streetscape from the 1930's, a film program and traditional exhibits of street railway artifacts and photographs.

Paul Peck Humanities Institute
The Paul Peck Humanities Institute at Montgomery College in Rockville is an innovative partnership between Montgomery College and the Smithsonian Institution, one of only three such partnerships in the country and the only one involving a community college. Montgomery College and the Smithsonian have created an alliance to enhance teaching and learning of the humanities. The Institute hosts a wide range of scholarly and community-focused activities including an annual faculty seminar led by a Smithsonian scholar-in-residence, museum-based faculty research fellowships, student internships at the Smithsonian, and public lectures and symposia.

Peerless Rockville
Peerless Rockville safeguards and promotes Rockville's past by preserving buildings, spaces, objects and information important to the city's heritage. They provide educational and interpretive activities that include tours, special events at historic places and exhibits in a variety of venues. Recently, they were selected by the National Building Museum to adapt and implement in Rockville a summer program called "Investigating Where We Live" that teaches middle-school children to photo-document

their communities and then to interpret and present their findings through writing and exhibits.

Sandy Spring Museum
The mission of the Sandy Spring Museum is to collect, arrange, preserve and exhibit books, maps, manuscripts, newspapers, art, artifacts and other materials relative to or illustrative of the history and heritage of the greater Sandy Spring community, one of the earliest settlements in this part of Maryland dating back more than 200 years. The museum operates from a building designed and constructed in 1997 that includes a large exhibit space, a community meeting room, a farm equipment building, administrative wing and large basement storage area. They present educational programs, art exhibits, concerts and many other family-oriented events.

The Writer's Center
The Writer's Center is a regional literary center supporting both beginning and established writers in all genres, small presses, and the general public. Their mission is to help writers develop skills and audiences, as well as serve the general arts community in Montgomery County. The Writer's Center offers workshops, readings, workspace and equipment, book fairs and lectures, book and magazine distribution and technical an support services for individual writers and organizations.

Issues Specific to the Humanities

There are issues and, in the final analysis, opportunities, specific to the humanities:

- If the arts are currently under-funded by the public sector, the humanities are even deeper in need.
- If private philanthropic support for the arts is inadequate in Montgomery County, it is even more difficult here and throughout the United States to generate private support for the humanities.
- If the arts face competition from Washington's theatrical and musical organizations, there are even more powerful and prestigious institutions in Washington providing world class programming in humanistic subjects.
- And if small arts organizations find it difficult to survive, humanities organizations are often even smaller in terms of budget size, less likely to have professional staffs, and far more dependent on the efforts of volunteers.

Former Commission on the Humanities Commission

Prior to the humanities becoming a part of the mission of the Arts and Humanities Council, humanities organizations were served by the Commission on the Humanities. The County Council established the Commission on the Humanities by law in 1984 to encourage, promote and provide humanities programs to County residents. The Commission fulfilled its mission by co-sponsoring and funding humanities programs. Throughout the years, the Commission sponsored grants to organizations and individuals

for humanities programs as well as sponsoring the Mark Curtis lecture and scholarship fund. The Commission received staff support from the County Department of Libraries.

The Commission on the Humanities was encouraged by the County Council to find a new home not within the departments of County government. Recognizing the need to affiliate with a non-government institution, they sought an organization that would provide visibility for the humanities. The Commission on the Humanities approached the Arts Council to discuss the possibility of a trial affiliation. The Commission was interested in the Arts Council because they had programs and services that are similar in nature to the humanities programs. Working with the Arts Council would be beneficial to ensuring a long-term ability to provide humanities and arts opportunities for Montgomery Count residents. After considerable study and review by the two organizations and elected officials, the County Council enacted legislation merging the Commission on the Humanities into the Arts Council which then became the Arts and Humanities Council.

Issues Related to the Delivery of Humanities Programming

To assess the issues related to the delivery of humanities programming in the county, the consultants interviewed representatives of ten organizations and several former Humanities Commissioners to assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. While this group constituted a very small sampling of opinion and institutional experience upon which to base conclusions, a number of recurring themes emerged. These coincided with our own analysis of the current circumstances and environment. Among the recurring issues was the need to:

1) Raise the profile of the humanities. This universal desire was repeatedly expressed in terms of protecting the humanities as the larger Arts and Humanities Council begins to embrace the functions of the Humanities Commission. While some people suggested that the solution might reside in greater public promotion and advertising campaigns, their ideas were only vaguely formulated and unrealistic in financial terms. A number of people also conceded that they did not really have a very good working definition of the humanities and, indeed, could not articulate a precise mission for the Humanities Commission. They seemed receptive to further, well-guided reading and discussion about the humanities and their public (as distinct from discipline-bound research) purposes. These concerns about the profile and visibility of the humanities were countered, to a degree, by the fact that current humanities programming is highly successful. Programs presented by the Paul Peck Humanities Institute, for example, are usually attended by standing room only audiences. This level of response in the community could be indicative of an untapped potential were there to be more visibility for humanities programs.

2) Increase outreach to new groups in the county to be reflective of the rapidly changing population. There was concern that there is a lack of this type of outreach activity. This was further articulated as the need to:

- Accommodate and build understanding among diverse cultural groups,
- Preserve old identities while constructing a new sense of identification with Montgomery County, and
- Deal with the wide income and educational disparities in the county. As one person observed, "We must use the humanities to focus on the largest issues affecting our lives."

3) Strengthen and create community and county identity. The humanities were viewed as a vehicle for defining community and probing the direction and significance of the changes affecting the region. Humanities programs also were considered a tool for the community to think about leadership within the county and for reaching out to groups concerned with civic affairs such as Leadership Montgomery. The current perceived lack of a community identity extended to the need to focus on programs dealing with local history and with placing national and global events in local perspective.

4) Develop the organizational capacity of humanities organizations. Most Montgomery County humanities organizations currently are run exclusively by volunteers, rather than paid professional staff. All of the organizations whose staff and board members were interviewed expressed a desire to strengthen their group's management skills and programs. There was a universal desire for technical assistance. To add programs, strengthen fund-raising and public outreach, and enhance managerial skills will require both short-term training programs and financial assistance in retaining consultants.

5) Avoid competition with existing programs in the District of Columbia and recognize that there is competition for people's time and attention in a community where commuting is a way of life and transportation is neither swift nor easy. Interviewees indicated Montgomery County humanities programs should focus on local perspectives. Everyone recognized the competition from institutions in Washington — the museums and galleries, the lecture series, the theatrical performances and concerts series — and many reached the same conclusions. Interview participants also indicated a desire to collaborate with national organizations. Some models already exist including Montgomery College's affiliation with the American Film Institute, and the Paul Peck Humanities Institute partnership with the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian Associates Program is clearly willing to repeat its Washington programs for a more northerly suburban audience. The Smithsonian has identified the need for a reliable venue in Montgomery County seating approximately 500 people and capable of scheduling events well in advance and on a regular basis. A Germantown or Gaithersburg venue, at a distance from the District of Columbia, has the potential to avoid competition with existing programs by the Smithsonian.

6) Develop programs on philanthropy and recognize that the development of substantial giving will require exemplary leadership and considerable time to evolve. For a county well above the norm in income and wealth, private philanthropy is regrettably low. Time and again, the interview subjects expressed their regrets about the state of philanthropy in

Montgomery County. They felt that there was little in the way of corporate philanthropic leadership and no significant tradition of private giving, either by prominent individuals or foundations. Interview subjects also acknowledged that Baltimore has had a robust philanthropic tradition despite this general countywide circumstance.

7) Resolve issues related to primary audience and constituencies for the humanities. Some felt that the Arts and Humanities Council should focus on young people by building on a successful reward and recognition program in the high schools. Others thought that the primary audience ought to be adults, particularly senior citizens, and that the humanities in the schools were chiefly a matter for those involved with school curriculum decisions. Another fault line in the assessment concerned the Arts and Humanities Council's principal institutional constituencies. Some interview subjects felt that AHCMC should work with a handful of academic institutions and other organizations capable of generating the highest quality programming in the humanities. Audiences would grow as the caliber of programming was elevated. But others preferred to continue a small grants program, disbursing funds to as wide a set of organizations as possible. They reasoned that the most appealing programming, with built-in audiences, would emerge from grass-roots organizations and those most closely attuned to specific communities.

Issues Relating to the Merger of the Humanities Commission and the Arts Council

In November 1999, the County Council adopted legislation that dissolved the Humanities Commission and incorporated its functions into the responsibilities of the Arts Council. The Arts Council was then renamed the Arts and Humanities Council. This merger has necessitated that the Board and the staff begin to think differently about the organization's mission and operations. (The key issue of governance, i.e., to make the integration of the two agencies a reality, has been the task of the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations, who undertook that work in a separate study.) Integrating the Commission on the Humanities with the Arts Council must be done with:

- Sensitivity to community perception about the merger and its implications;
- Understanding of the equal rather than adjunct status of humanities programming in the new, merged organizations although these programs may share similar specific objectives of arts programs;
- Careful attention to choice of the new organization's name to signal a common mission; and
- Common programmatic goals and a unified agenda. These should be explicit about the underlying values of the merged organization.

These initial insights have several other broad implications for humanities scholars and organizations. The Arts and Humanities Council should

1) Be concerned with enlisting humanities scholars primarily in their capacity as creators and organizers of public programs and as authors of publications and other

materials for wide public dissemination. The Council should not simply provide funds for purely scholarly research. This necessarily limits what it can do for individual scholars. Even those individuals awarded humanities fellowships under the AHCMC grants program must show evidence of having presented a public program in the county.

2) Work in close collaboration with organizations already skilled in creating public programs in the humanities. Among these organizations are the Paul Peck Humanities Institute of Montgomery College and the Smithsonian Associates Program. There is every reason to strengthen existing programs and draw already successful programs to the county and no reason to duplicate what is already being done elsewhere.

3) Develop a better overall view of organizations, both formal 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and unincorporated groups that are engaged in activities pertinent to the humanities. There is relatively little knowledge of the range and activities of humanities organizations in Montgomery County. While we know that there are some 60 historical societies in the county, we know less about activities embedded in culturally specific or faith-based organizations.

Virtually everyone interviewed for this aspect of the study concluded that the roster of Humanities Commission grantees had been too narrow in the past, that greater community outreach was necessary, and that a better grasp of the full range of humanities activities was important. This will be a continuing task for AHCMC's staff, and a rather more difficult one than tracking the activities of arts organizations. It is fundamental, however, given the distinctive needs of humanities organizations and their frequently stated need for technical assistance.

---

5. The Humanities: RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations emerge from this assessment of issues. They are enumerated here, but in the spirit of integration of the humanities with the arts--namely the funding, programs and activities of the Arts and Humanities Council, several of the recommendations concerning the humanities have been integrated into the general recommendations of the plan.

5.1 Continue forward with activities to merge the County Commission on the Humanities with the Arts Council.

COMPLETED

5.2 Every effort should be made on the part of the new Arts and Humanities Council to integrate arts and humanities programming, and to embody that integration in mission statements, requests for proposals, and other Arts and Humanities Council documents.

The articulation of mission and purpose will require sustained discussion on the part of the Board and staff about the meaning of the humanities and the public purposes of the arts. Those who were interviewed about the humanities have expressed a desire to engage in such a dialogue.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY2001
Initial Steps:

- COMPLETED new grant guidelines that include both arts and humanities.
- As policy and program documents come up for review, attention will be given to ensuring continued discussion of the integration of the humanities into AHCMC's mission.

5.3 The new Arts and Humanities Council has extraordinary opportunities to build partnerships and collaborative relationships, and to serve a coordinating function, both within the county and the wider metropolitan area.

There are academic institutions (Montgomery College and the University of Maryland/Shady Grove as well as College Park), civic groups (Leadership Montgomery), and nationally prominent institutions (the Smithsonian Institution and American Film Institute), whose humanities programs can be linked to the Arts and Humanities Council's mission and through which AHCMC can gain considerable leverage both for its financial and its staff resources.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Montgomery College
Other academic institutions
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:

- Initiate overtures to humanities organizations to define scope of potential collaborations.
- Ensure that humanities organizations are at the table during activities related to other areas, such as funding and marketing.

5.4 The Arts and Humanities Council should continue to survey the range of humanities organizations and embedded humanities activities in the county. And it must look to its own locale and place, to issues of identity, community building, and leadership.

Continuing to identify humanities organizations and their activities and calendars will allow AHCMC to better understand the needs of these organizations. It also will give AHCMC an opportunity to play a convening, clearinghouse, and policy discussion role in relationship to these organizations. Facilitating greater communication among many

small organizations, gaining an understanding of their disparate activities, and working to serve organizations whether or not they receive direct grants would enhance the sector as a whole and take advantage of the Arts and Humanities Council's particular vantage point over a wide range of organizations.

Programmatic opportunities abound and the humanities can serve many and diverse local needs: cultivating citizenship, reflecting on the dynamic changes that are reshaping the county, building a sense of local identity, constructing philanthropic values and a healthy nonprofit sector, among many other challenges. In the end, it is an astute sense not only of specific geographic place that matters in these efforts but also a sense of time, that is to say, of where we are situated at this particular moment of historical and cultural change. The programs of the Arts and Humanities Council should aspire to this broadly humanistic task, relying on all the resources of the humanities and embodying the spirit of this concept in all of the programs and activities of the Arts and Humanities Council.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing
Initial Step:

- Continually work on identifying resources to support local humanities involvement in all program development and policy revisions

6. Individual Artists and Scholars: FINDINGS

Individual artists and scholars provide the foundation for the arts and humanities. Without their creative and generative work, the basis for human expression and creativity would be impoverished. They reveal to us the meaning of time and community and our place as human beings in society and the universe. They preserve our history. They are the messages we leave to the next generations of the things we aspired to today. In short, they civilize us. Clearly, it is in the community's interest to ensure that artists and scholars are well supported and able to make a decent living.

There is little detailed information about the number or circumstances of individual artists and scholars in Montgomery County. However, it is reasonable to assume that the situations of the artists and scholars in Montgomery County are different in very few ways from artists and scholars across America. Particularly in the case of the generative artists, i.e., those who create original works such as painters, composers and choreographers, there are few meaningful support systems. Those involved in interpretation, i.e., actors, dancers, musicians, etc., as opposed to creation, generally have some institutional support system such as a museum, a theater, a musical ensemble, a dance troupe or a university, within which to produce their art or scholarship. The individual scholar, writer or artist has no such organizational home in which to create and perhaps to provide an ongoing source of income. At the same time, both generative and interpretive artists and scholars face difficulties in securing enough income and support to continue their work. In Montgomery County, the high cost of living and soaring housing costs present major challenges, as does the cost of studio space. In general, art and scholarship comprise some of the lowest paying professions in our society. Members of the general public may believe that art is a hobby rather than a profession. More often than not, artists and scholars must earn their living with work other than their chosen disciplines. For our communities, the price is the art and scholarship that goes uncreated.

AHCMC provides direct cash grants to individual artists and scholars, as well as grants to organizations to offer programs supporting the work of individual artists and scholars. Very few local arts and humanities agencies, whether private or public, offer such funding. The highly publicized national controversies of a decade ago over funding of the work of Robert Maplethorpe and Andres Serano have made many funders fearful of providing direct or even indirect support of individual artists and scholars. AHCMC is to be commended for continuing to make direct cash grants to artists. At the same time, the FY2001 level of funding is exceedingly small, with just six awards of $1,500 each. For FY 2002, AHCMC has requested funding to support 12 awards of $3,000 each.

A new program of support has been developed for FY 2002, the Visiting Artists and Scholars Grants. This program provides cash grants that vary from $250 to $2,000 and are directed to "support an individual artist or scholar who performs or presents for an audience arranged by a community or service organization whose primary mission is not related to an arts or humanities discipline. Both must agree to carry out an activity that

engages audiences in arts and/or humanities experiences. Payment will be made to the artist or scholar." This strategy will have the beneficial effect of opening up new avenues of support for artists and scholars among institutions not usually in the arts and humanities business. Nevertheless, the level of funding is modest and does little to address the underlying economic conditions that face individual artists and scholars in the humanities.

---

6. Individual Artists and Scholars: RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 As urban development and redevelopment occurs, the County and other local development agencies should actively seek opportunities to develop spaces that support the work of individual artists and scholars.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Planning Board
Department of Economic Development
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002 and ongoing
Initial Step:

- AHCMC meet with Planning Board and Department of Economic Development to discuss policies that would include consideration of creation of spaces for individual artists and scholars in development planning processes.

6.2 Over time, the funding by AHCMC should rise to a level such that the grants for individual artists and scholars will be more than symbolic support, but will contribute to a professional income for artists and scholars.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2003 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Develop budget requests to increase the size of individual fellowships.
- Solicit input and advocacy from cultural constituency to support requests.

6.3 Since little information is known about the specific numbers and circumstances of individual artists and scholars, the AHCMC should conduct a survey of artists and scholars in Montgomery County.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2004
Initial Steps:

- Research other jurisdictions that have conducted similar surveys.
- Convene focus groups to develop survey content and methodology.

---

7. Public Art: FINDINGS

While public art was not identified as a separate issue by the Steering Committee, but was considered a subset of the "individual artists and scholars" issue, it is presented here separately. There are two reasons for this. First, the issue is a very specific one, relating only to the visual arts. Second, it is not simply an issue of supporting artists, but an issue that relates to civic design and the creation of more successful public spaces.

History of Public Art Programs in the County

Montgomery County first established a public art program in 1983 with the passage of a percent for art ordinance that mandated that 1% of certain County capital projects be set aside for the acquisition and commissioning of artworks to be included in those facilities. This program was called the County Art in Architecture Program. At the same time, separate public art programs were administered at Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools and the County parks system. Over the years, more than 200 works were collected.

During the economic recession of the early 1990s, the public art program became a point of controversy. The program was attacked by the County employees union as an inappropriate expenditure of County dollars at a time when lay-offs of County employees was being considered. The County Council, responding to the fiscal situation, repealed the percent for art ordinance.

In 1995, a restoration of the public art program occurred with a new law. Chapter 8 of the Montgomery County Code, Article VI "Works of Art in Public Architecture," Section 8-45 states that, "Each year the County Council should consider appropriating funds for the next fiscal year to the Public Arts Trust in an amount equal to 0.05% of the combined total approved capital expenditures for the then-current fiscal year for County Government, Public Schools, Montgomery College and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission."

Public Arts Trust

This program is known as the Public Arts Trust. The Public Arts Trust is guided by a 13-member Steering Committee that includes private sector representatives as well as representatives of government agencies including the Department of Recreation, Montgomery College, City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville and the Department of Public Works and Transportation. The Steering Committee developed goals including

a) To help create an environment that supports art and artists by making public art a focus as well as a shared and natural part of everyday life;
b) To place public art where it will be enjoyed by the most people, as well as use public art to reach out to people who may have less access to it;

c) To use public art and its selection process to foster community identity and spirit, encourage dialogue, and promote cultural enrichment; and
d) To initiate partnership with private and public entities, encourage gifts, donations and grants of funds for public art purposes.

The Public Arts Trust program allows three types of projects in the community: a) permanent, site-specific art works commissioned for installation on public property in the county through a competition process; b) temporary exhibitions and other public art programs and events; and c) the purchase of existing works of art when appropriate. The Arts and Humanities Council administers the Trust, under a contract with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. The program receives staff support from a contract program administrator and an assistant assigned part-time from the AHCMC staff.

The initial appropriation for public art was $140,000. For FY01, this increased to $192,000 based on the County's Capital Improvements Program expenditures.

National Models

Nearly all of the 300 public art programs run by city and county governments in this country utilize a mandated percent for art mechanism, allocating from one to two percent of the construction budgets for art. This method of funding public art has several advantages. It ensures that the funds for art will be set aside and not lost when the inevitable moment of "value engineering" comes to the project. It also establishes an appropriate level of funding that is in scale with the rest of the project. And, it guarantees that art treatment is at least a possibility in every eligible project. The most successful public art programs in the country are guided by a master plan which creates an overall vision and which relates the art program to overall urban design issues that confront the community.

Evaluating the Public Arts Trust

In Montgomery County, with its lump sum annual funding, there is no presumption that public art elements will be included in any given project and no overall vision about the role public art might play in enhancing the County public works program. On the other hand, the Trust is able to designate existing building for works of art and "retrofit" excellent public art into buildings that did not include public art at they time they were constructed. Also, the Trust provides a centralized authority in the selection of art, in effect streamlining and adding professionalism to a process that otherwise would be carried out by a variety of agencies. Another purpose for operating the Trust is to avoid necessarily allocating the largest sum to the largest capital project. In enacting this legislation, the County Council specifically chose not to tie the percent for art to each capital project, but rather to direct the total percentage to the Trust for allocation to specific projects and sites.

There are two major shortcomings to this approach:

1) *The amount of funds generated by the application of 0.05% to the capital budget is meager compared to national standards of one to two percent and inadequate to create public art projects on the same scale as the projects in which the art is placed.* For example, the project at Strathmore Hall has a budget of $89 million. Of this, $44.5 million will be funded by the County and appears in the County's Capital Improvements Program. Under the traditional percent for art approach, allocating one or two percent of the budget, $445,000 to $890,000 would be available for art. Instead, the Public Art Trust has allocated just $7,500 for artist Athena Tacha to design a walkway leading up to the Hall. This money is for design services only. No money is currently available for implementing the art project. Grant support will be sought, but is by no means assured. Because of the limited funding allocated to the public art program, it is likely that the concert hall, which represents one of the very best opportunities for public art, will have a single art project of very modest scale. Similarly, the County is building a new conference center and hotel complex. This facility will be one of the most visible public projects in Montgomery County, but will have a very limited public art project. The overall budget for this project is $72 million. A mere $75,000 for public art has been allocated. While this number represents almost a third of the total Public Arts Trust funding for FY 2001, it represents just 0.001% of the Conference Center budget.

2) *The County's public arts program lacks a master plan that creates an overall vision for public art and relates public art to overall urban design issues in the community.* While the Public Art Trust Steering Committee has done an outstanding job of allocating scarce resources to generate public art in the community, their work is essentially ad hoc. An overall public art master plan would assess community needs, identify potential sites for public art and provide guidance to the Steering Committee in setting priorities for selecting sites for and allocating resources to public art.

---

7. Public Art: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The AHCMC should seek funds from the County and other sources to develop a Public Art Master Plan for Montgomery County.

This plan should create an overall vision and relate the public art program to overall urban design issues, explore ways to include a humanities component in this program, and examine mechanisms to encourage public art in new private developments. The plan should identify ways in which the AHCMC could serve as a resource to private developers in planning public art projects. It would help carry Montgomery County to new levels of awareness of public art and foster additional support for the public art program.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2003
Initial Steps:

- Secure sources of funding to develop plan.
- Public Arts Trust Steering Committee should develop scope of plan and approach to master plan process.
- Develop RFP for planning consultant.

7.2 The County should increase the annual allocation for the Public Arts Trust to bring it into alignment with national norms of 1-2%.

At a minimum, the annual allocation for public art projects should be increased to 0.5% of the County Government, Public Schools, Montgomery College and Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission capital budgets, until the public art master plan develops an overall vision and direction for the program. This will permit more significant works to be commissioned for the major capital projects planned or underway over the next few years.

Lead Agencies: County Department of Recreation
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2003
Initial Steps:

- AHCMC meet with Department of Recreation staff to discuss expanded program.
- AHCMC develop budget request for FY 2003.

---

8. Marketing and Visibility: FINDINGS

One of the most vexing problems to confront arts and humanities organizations, both individually and collectively, is lack of visibility in the community. The cause of this problem is easy to identify and difficult to solve. Given the high costs of print and broadcast media and other avenues of reaching large-scale audiences, most cultural organizations simply do not have the budgets required to support major marketing and image-building campaigns. Yet, it is critical that steps be taken to remedy the situation. The County and its arts and humanities institutions are making very large capital investments in new and renovated performance and presentation facilities. These investments are difficult to justify without the expectation that the facilities will be used heavily by the public. Yet that high level of public use cannot be expected without efforts to promote the venues and the cultural programs they will host.

The basic reason for nonprofit organizations to be involved in marketing is that it enables them to be more effective in achieving their objectives. Resources must be attracted, employees must be located, and customers must be found. Designing proper incentives is a key step in stimulating these exchanges. Marketing is the applied science most concerned with managing exchanges effectively and efficiently. Good marketing means improved satisfaction of the target markets. In this case, the target markets are Montgomery County residents and visitors to the area. Marketing places a great emphasis on measuring needs and desires of the target market, and improved efficiency in product development, pricing, communication and distribution. If an organization or community has not done this, or does not do it well, the citizenry are apt to be poorly served.

Many factors contribute to building awareness of the availability of arts and humanities programs and to developing loyal, engaged audiences. Among these are direct and indirect methods to reach the intended target markets including such strategies as advertising, public relations, personal selling, direct mail and promotions; location of product delivery, pricing, distribution decisions, timetable, budget, and personnel to execute the plan.

Community Awareness of Cultural Offerings in Montgomery County

There is a need to build greater awareness for the arts and humanities in Montgomery County among local residents and visitors, both local and distant. Marketing and visibility were nearly universally cited by the art and humanities groups interviewed as one of the most significant needs.

1) Currently there are no coordinated marketing efforts among arts and humanities institutions and few groups possess the financial resources to adequately market their products. A method cited for how an arts consumer base can be built was placement of

an insert in the utility bills of all county residents. This would incorporate a coupon redeemable for families to attend any arts or humanities event in the county. Other tactics cited included using local cable television channels and BRAVO to disseminate information about arts programs.

2) There is a lack of any real arts criticism by the local print and broadcast media. The Gazette newspaper is generous in providing space and sponsorships to local cultural groups, but *The Washington Post* gives scant support or critical attention to arts and humanities in Montgomery County despite a significant population base and high readership in the area.

2) The Conference and Visitors Bureau does not have an organized cultural tourism program. There is interest in the historic preservation community to develop such a program based on the community's cultural heritage. According to a 1998 study by the Travel Industry Association of America, cultural tourists spend more money than the average traveler per trip ($615 vs. $425), take longer trips (4.7 days vs. 3.3 drays), shop more (45 % vs. 33 %), and are more likely to spend their nights in hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast inns (56% vs. 42%). The success of cultural tourism is exemplified by a program put in place in Miami-Dade County, Florida. That county learned that half of the area's visitors to the area did not stay in hotels. Rather they stayed in private homes. Thus, the first step in their campaign was to launch a $1 million advertising campaign in the *Miami Herald* to promote the arts and humanities offerings of the area to local residents.

---

8. Marketing and Visibility: RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Arts and Humanities Council should develop and maintain a "Cultural Directory" or roster consisting of a comprehensive listing of all cultural organizations, including small, emerging and culturally specific artists, scholars and arts and humanities organizations that would serve as a resource for civic, educational and other cultural institutions.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2002
Initial Steps:

- Develop outreach component of AHCMC activities to identify artists, scholars and arts and humanities organizations.
- Develop and publish a roster of artists, cultural organizations, humanities groups and other resources.
- Post roster on AHCMC website and distribute printed copies countywide.

8.2 The AHCMC should seek funding for, and should implement, a dramatic marketing campaign for the arts and humanities in Montgomery County.

The purpose of this campaign would be to raise awareness of the thriving cultural resources in Montgomery County. Montgomery County arts and humanities organizations should actively seek to market themselves as high quality, close-to-home alternatives to District of Columbia cultural institutions. This campaign should have a simple, direct and unmistakable message to the effect that the arts and humanities are right here in our own county. This effort should be coordinated with the economic development marketing programs of the County and with the Conference and Visitors Bureau.

Lead Agencies: AHCMC
Conference and Visitors Bureau
Department of Economic Development
Local print and broadcast media
Timeline: FY 2003 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Establish Marketing Committee at AHCMC composed of Board members and others with interests and skills.
- Develop initial strategy and approach with Marketing Committee
- Solicit *pro bono* services from marketing/public relations agency.
- Develop funding plan.
- Seek media support for in-kind contributions.

8.3 The AHCMC should convene the arts and humanities institutions staff, as well as individual artists and humanities scholars, to devise specific strategies for marketing these events and activities in the county and to identify resources that can support those strategies.

Lead Agencies: AHCMC
Local arts and humanities groups and individuals
Timeline: FY 2002 - 03
Initial Step:

- Convene series of meetings with constituent groups to explore collaborative marketing strategies.

8.4 Working with the Conference and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and local chambers of commerce, the AHCMC should explore opportunities for marketing local arts and humanities activities in a larger cultural tourism campaign, and promoting local sites of historic significance.

There must be a focal point for information about local artists, workshops, exhibitions, lectures and performances. The Arts and Humanities Council could partner with the county Conference and Visitors Bureau to disseminate this kind of information to meeting planners, concierges and tour operators.

This effort also should extend to marketing local arts locally. Numerous studies of tourism around the country have demonstrated that more than half of the visitors to a given region stay in private homes. Thus, marketing to local residents provides a direct avenue to a majority of the potential cultural tourists who visit Montgomery County. This effort could be especially beneficial to small and emerging groups that otherwise do not have the resources to market their offerings successfully.

Cultural tourism can be one of the smartest strategies for developing "visitorship" to a region. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, 46% of the 199.8 million adult travelers in the U.S. in l998 included a cultural, arts or historic activity while on a trip of 50 miles or more. Visiting an historic site such as an historic community or building was the most popular activity among travelers (31%), followed by visiting a museum (24%), visiting an art gallery (15%) and seeing live performances (14%). More than a quarter of these cultural travelers extended their stay because of cultural events and activities, with 40% of those adding one or more nights in the communities they were visiting.

A joint marketing effort among the AHCMC, CVB, and local chambers of commerce should be linked to the proposed effort by the Historic Preservation Office to establish a Heritage Tourism campaign.

Lead Agencies: AHCMC
Historic Preservation Office
CVB
Chamber of Commerce
Timeline: FY 2003
Initial Steps:

- Work with CVB to develop a steering committee for cultural tourism initiative.
- Identify and cultivate sponsors for cultural tourism campaign.

8.5 The County Executive and County Council should convene a meeting with corporate representatives, to promote higher visibility in the corporate community for arts and humanities programs in Montgomery County

This effort will promote corporate participation in the arts and humanities as a way of supporting economic development and improved quality of life for employees and customers. Over time, this effort should serve to encourage corporate giving to the arts and humanities. It also will familiarize newly-wealthy individuals from the biotech and other "new economy" businesses with philanthropic opportunities to support arts and humanities organizations.

Lead Agencies: County Executive and County Council
AHCMC
Timeline: FY 2003

Initial Steps:

- AHCMC work with Executive and Council to develop a strategy to create Corporate Committee for the Arts and Humanities.
- County Executive and County Council convene meeting with business leaders to define Committee purpose and membership.

8.6 The County and the Planning Board should develop and pursue funding for heritage tourism campaigns to raise awareness of local historic resources among both residents and visitors.

This program should be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions where there are similar efforts, and with the Conference and Visitors Bureau.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Planning Board
Historic Preservation Office
County government
AHCMC

Timeline: FY 2003

Initial Steps:

- Office of Historic Preservation to submit heritage tourism proposal to State and County for funding.
- AHCMC coordinate cultural tourism efforts with heritage tourism program.

---

9. Transportation and Access: FINDINGS

As was noted earlier in the Planning Context section of this report, transportation and the urbanization/suburbanization of the region have growing impacts on the life of residents in Montgomery County. Commuting by automobile continues to be the transportation mode of choice by more than five out of six county residents. This has led to traffic that now is second only to Los Angeles for the level of congestion and length of the "rush hour." In Montgomery County it might be more appropriately described as the "rush day."

This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for local arts and humanities groups. The challenge is to convince people to go out in the evening at all. The opportunity is to tout convenience and the quality of arts and humanities programs in the communities where people live. Other transportation-related marketing tools could be developed such as ticket discounts for those presenting evidence of public transit use to reach the event.

This opportunity suggests that Montgomery County arts and humanities institutions could capture audiences that might otherwise patronize DC arts and humanities events. Numerous national and local surveys of participation in cultural activities have shown that "not enough time" and "lack of programs convenient to where I live" are frequently cited as reasons for not attending arts and humanities events. This suggests that the marketing campaign recommended in Chapter 8 should begin at home, focusing on the quality of local arts and humanities programs and their ease of access.

---

9. Transportation and Access: RECOMMENDATION

9.1 The County and other developers of new cultural facilities should continue to favor sites that lie along existing and planned transportation corridors, convenient to parking and public transportation.

Strathmore Hall is a perfect example of how this strategy can be effective. The site is already known as a destination for arts and humanities. It is located on one of the major north-south highways in the county. And, most importantly, it is convenient to the Metro system with a direct linkage to the Grosvenor/Strathmore station. The station will provide parking for those who choose to drive, but also will be easy for those who want to get out of their automobiles and use public transit. The new Round House Theatre School in Silver Spring and the new Round House Theatre in Bethesda are additional examples of locations readily accessible by both car and public transit.

The investment by the region in public transportation will only accelerate in the future. Thoughtful decisions about the location of new arts and humanities facilities will allow citizens to make choices about their modes of transportation.

Lead Agencies: Montgomery County Planning Board
County Governments
AHCMC

Timeline: 2001 and ongoing

Initial Steps:

- Continue current strategy.
- AHCMC work with local groups planning new facilities to implement this recommendation.

10. Organizational Issues

While organizational structure and staffing was not identified as a critical issues by the Cultural Plan Steering Committee, inevitably certain issues relating to governance, structure, policies and staffing arose in the planning process. Two organizations were mentioned in particular and are included in this section: The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County and the County Department of Health and Human Services.

A. The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County: FINDINGS

History of the Arts and Humanities Council

The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), formerly the Arts Council of Montgomery County, is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2001. During much of these 25 years, the Arts Council remained small and had a limited mission. In recent years, it has grown dramatically and has expanded its vision. In 2000, the Montgomery County Commission on the Humanities was merged into the Arts Council creating the Arts and Humanities Council that exists today.

Also during this time period, determined efforts by advocates have resulted in large increases in both state and local funding to support the arts and humanities programs and far greater visibility of the cultural community in terms of public awareness. In just the past five years, general operating support for County cultural groups has more than tripled and the County government has allocated funds for this first-ever community cultural plan.

When it was established, the Arts Council had three objectives: establishing an art center, providing grants to artists; and providing space for artists to work, exhibit and perform. Ten years later in the mid-1980s, two of those objectives were achieved with the opening of Strathmore Hall Arts Center and the inception of successful fundraising events to support artists' fellowship grants.

In 1995, the Task Force on the Future of the Arts in Montgomery County presented its findings in a report that stressed the "disproportionate small share of funding from private and government sources" that had left the county's arts programs under-funded. "These percentages are well outside the ranges for national and even regional standards." (*Artscapes*, Nov/Dec '95, p. 1) Beginning that year, the Arts Council began to provide grants to outreach programs in schools, senior centers and special needs facilities. These

continued in similar forms through FY2001, with Organizational Enhancement Grants, Artist Fellowships, Outreach Grants, and other funding programs.

Arts programs in the schools, however, were in an alarming state. In 1997, the Board of Education eliminated the Middle School Interrelated Arts Program, thereby raising the student-to-teacher ratio for elementary art and music teachers far above the already high numbers of 500:1. Then the Montgomery County School Board eliminated most elementary school art teachers' positions, prompting then-ACMC Executive Director Dianna Souder to decry the move in testimony before the board. (*Artscapes*, July/Aug 97, p.1) The Arts Council countered with a highly visible "Go Back to School with the Arts" campaign, inviting legislators to literally attend schools and learn first-hand the importance of art in the classroom. Unfortunately, this effort was not successful, and few restorations of the arts education cuts were implemented.

The law creating the Public Arts Trust was adopted in 1995 to replace the County's percent-for-art program that was repealed in the early 1990s. The Trust is a collaboration between the Arts and Humanities Council and the County Department of Recreation and continues to be administered by AHCMC. The law directs the County Council to consider appropriating 0.05% of the County's annual capital budget for public art each year.

In 1997, the County's funding to the Arts Council was increased to $406,390. Also that year, the Executive recommended and the Council approved special one-time grants to six organizations for capital projects, ranging from $30,000 for building improvements at The Writer's Center to $170,000 for a feasibility study for a new performing arts center at Strathmore Hall.

The following year saw a flurry of new activity with support from the County increasing by 10.5%. The Arts Council that year initiated the presentation of the new Ida F. Haimovicz Visual Arts Award for a high school student planning a career in the visual arts underwritten by the Haimovicz family. This was also the year that the Public Arts Trust selected and funded its first artwork. Also in 1998, the Arts Council's annual "Dining with the Arts" exceeded its fundraising goals, netting $12,000 for Artist Fellowships. The Arts Council spearheaded an advocacy campaign, called "The Arts Are Blooming in Montgomery County," that succeeded in increasing County government funding for the arts. A partnership between the Arts Council and *Gazette Newspapers* yielded an online presence with a new website. Finally, the Arts Council celebrated its increasing visibility with a new image and logo.

In the first quarter of 1999, significant state funding was secured for many important local projects, including a new concert hall and education center at Strathmore Hall; $1 million to restore Glen Echo Park; the building of a new theater at the Bethesda Academy of the Performing Arts; and the funding of hundreds of thousands of dollars for renovations of the Music Building at Montgomery College, the Germantown Cultural Arts Center, Pyramid Atlantic, and the auditorium at "Old Blair" High School. This was

followed in June 1999 by the allocation of $866,532 in grants from the Maryland State Arts Council to various Montgomery County cultural organizations, with $90,282 directed to the Arts Council, enabling a number of important projects to move ahead. July 1999 saw the first work installed under the Public Arts Trust at the Germantown Community Center. In 2000, the responsibilities and mandate of the Commission on the Humanities were transferred by the County Council to the Arts Council, which was renamed the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

At present, AHCMC is governed by at board of directors comprised of twenty-five volunteer members representing the broad spectrum of arts and humanities disciplines and community interests. The agency employs three full-time and three part-time professional staff members.

Local Arts and Humanities Agencies in America

The local arts agency (LAA) movement in America is largely a phenomenon of the past 35 years – the result of an effort by the National Endowment for the Arts to use its funding to create state arts agencies, which in turn, spawned a similar movement to create local arts agencies in their states. The earliest organizations to exhibit characteristics of a local arts agency were probably the Municipal Arts Commission in New York City and the Fairmont Park Art Association in Philadelphia, both more than 100 years old and primarily concerned with public art and civic beautification. In 1932, San Francisco created an arts commission as a chartered city agency. The earliest known private nonprofit arts council in the country was either the Winston-Salem (NC) Arts Council or the Quincy (IL) Arts Council, depending on whose claim one chooses to believe. Both were established in the late l940s.

Since that time, more than 4,000 LAAs have been created in this country. Approximately 75% of these are private, nonprofit organizations and 25% are public agencies. About 1,200 have professional paid staff; the remainder are volunteer-run organizations. They range in budget size from $100 per year for a small, volunteer group to more than $100 million per year for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Americans for the Arts (AFTA), a national service organization supporting the community arts movement in this country, defines a local arts agency as a "community organization or an agency of local government that supports cultural organizations, provides services to artists and arts organizations and presents arts programming to the public." LAAs promote the arts at the local level, endeavoring to make them a part of the daily fabric of community living. AFTA categorizes LAA services into five broad areas. According to their publication, *Local Arts Agency Facts 1998, a*ll LAAs provide one or more of the following services:

- *Cultural Programming:* Eighty-six percent of LAAs present cultural programming in the form of music, dance, drama, visual arts, arts in education, art in public places, festivals, literature readings, humanities programs and more.
- *Grant-making:* Sixty-three percent of LAAs provide financial support to arts and humanities organizations and to artists and humanities scholars. LAA funds are provided to both emerging and established organizations for operations support or to produce special projects.
- *Facility Management:* Sixty-nine percent of LAAs manage one or more cultural facilities such as performance halls, rehearsal spaces, galleries, museums or arts incubators.
- *Services to Individual Artists and Humanities Scholars and Cultural Groups:* Eighty-five percent of LAAs provide services to individuals and organizations, including seminars and workshops, technical assistance, fundraising, block booking, central accounting and marketing, group health insurance and advocacy.
- *Community Cultural Planning:* Thirty-five percent of LAAs lead the community-inclusive process of assessing cultural needs of the community and mapping a plan of implementation

AHCMC Compared to Nine County Arts Councils Nationwide

As part of the background research for this project, the consultant team commissioned Americans for the Arts to do a study comparing the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County with nine other county arts agencies around the country. (See Appendix D for a complete copy of the study report.) The study gathered data from the five-year period of l995 through 1999. Four of these agencies were, like AHCMC, private nonprofit entities: Arts Council of Fairfax County, VA, Westchester Arts in White Plains, NY, Arts Council of Silicon Valley in San Jose, CA and the Arts and Science Council of Charlotte/Mecklenburg, NC. The other five groups studied were agencies of county government: Broward County (FL) Cultural Affairs Division, Denver (CO) Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, Arlington County (VA) Cultural Affairs Division, King County (WA) Arts Commission, and Miami-Dade County (FL) Department of Cultural Affairs. In general, these counties represent urbanized jurisdictions with populations in the one to two million person range. The results of this study reveal much about the development of the arts and humanities in Montgomery County when compared to other similar jurisdictions around the nation.

<u>Budgets</u>
Perhaps the most striking fact to emerge from the research was the dramatic disparity in the level of the budget of the Arts and Humanities Council, when compared to the other groups. In 1999, AHCMC had a budget of $729,469, compared to an average of $6,248,457 for its counterparts (average of $4,054,247 for the nonprofits and $8,003,879 for the public agencies.) It should be noted that AHCMC has seen greater growth in its budgets over the FY 95-96 to FY 98-99 period, with an average growth rate of 24% compared to 12% for the study group. This growth rate however is based on a much

smaller base. Increases in the budgets for the control groups were on average much larger in absolute terms than for the AHCMC.

Looking at just public sector support for the arts and humanities, the picture does not change significantly. Even if one factored in a generous $2,500,000 in other county operating support for the arts and humanities through the Recreation Department, Montgomery County still lags far behind other urbanized counties in the level of cultural funding. Montgomery County has an estimated $2,949,040 for arts and humanities funding, compared with an average of $11,426,155 for the other nine counties.

Sources of Funding

The study noted that a number of the other counties had designated revenues to support their operating programs including an entertainment/admission tax, hotel-motel tax, dedicated property or sales tax receipts or a video tax. About half of the agencies had percent-for-art ordinances that generated a steady revenue stream for public art projects. Montgomery County has none of these designated funding sources.

AHCMC derives 68% of its total revenues from County government, compared to an average of 62% for the other nine counties. AHCMC gets 11% from the Maryland State Arts Council, compared to an average of 3% from state arts agencies in the other jurisdictions. The Arts and Humanities Council has, in general, low percentages of earned and private revenues, at 7% and 13% respectively, with comparison agencies averages of 14% and 17%. This is primarily a result of two policy positions taken by AHCMC: 1) that the Arts and Humanities Council should not present cultural programming, and 2) that it should not compete for scarce private funding against its constituent cultural organizations.

Community Development

One of the most striking differences between AHCMC and the other agencies lies in the area of using the arts and humanities to address social and community development issues, either through its own programming or through specific projects funded by grantees. In general, the comparison agencies were actively engaged in using arts and humanities as tools for addressing youth-at-risk, substance abuse, literacy, cultural/racial awareness, teen pregnancy and other social issues.

Public Art

Four of the nine comparison counties administered public art programs with a mean average of $1.4 million in projects annually and public art administration funds of $110,500 compared to $140,000 in projects and $25,000 in program administration for AHCMC.

Staffing

Staffing levels at the Arts and Humanities Council are low compared to the other county agencies. AHCMC had, in l999, two full-time and four part-time employees with three full-time equivalents. The average of the other agencies was 13.2 full-time and four part-

time for an average full-time equivalent of 16.1 employees. AHCMC relies more heavily on volunteers with 10, compared to an average of 1.7 for the other groups.

---

10. Arts and Humanities Council: RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County should establish a set of "core values" or organizational governing principles to guide its activities, including:

- Integrating the arts and humanities into all of its programs and grant-making activities;
- Actively addressing the needs and interests of small and emerging organizations, culturally specific groups, underserved populations, history and humanities organizations, and individual artists and scholars, as well as established cultural organizations;
- Focusing on services that enable the cultural community to thrive, rather than delivering program services themselves;
- For its own funding needs, seeking out funding sources that are targeted only to agencies like AHCMC and not fund-raising in a competitive posture with the organizations that it serves;
- Embracing and promoting cultural diversity;
- Facilitating and promoting partnerships and collaborations with and between public and private organizations in the interest of supporting the arts and humanities in Montgomery County;
- Promoting the arts and humanities as a method of addressing social and community development issues;
- Working to increase the level of private support for the arts and humanities;
- Working to increase opportunities for arts in education, especially in the public schools; and
- Increasing the visibility of and marketing opportunities for local cultural organizations and individual scholars.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: By the end of FY 2002.
Initial Steps:

- Establish task force on core values comprised of board members and selected representative members of the cultural constituency.
- Research models of core value statements by other local arts agencies.
- Draft core values statement

10.2 The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County should evolve into a full-service local arts and humanities agency that provides a full range of funding, services and activities in response to the needs of the community. Typically, such local agencies offer cultural services not otherwise provided in the community, promote arts education, make grants, oversee facilities, provide technical assistance and other services to artists and cultural organizations, foster collaborations and partnerships

in the cultural community, prepare community cultural plans and advocate on behalf of the arts and humanities.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: 2001 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Actively pursue implementation of all recommendations in the cultural plan.
- Periodically scan the cultural environment to identify areas of needed funding, programs, and services that are not otherwise available.

10.3 As it grows and develops over the coming years, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County should make special efforts to create a more diverse staff and board and should ensure that its services and grant guidelines are designed to be inclusive of all cultural groups.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: 2001 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Actively recruit diverse candidates for staff and board openings.
- Annually review programs and guidelines for ways to promote inclusiveness.
- Periodically convene a focus group to discuss diversity issues of AHCMC and its programs and services.

10.4 In light of federal and state efforts to more closely align cultural affairs with economic development strategies, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County should develop a closer working relationship with the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development.

The relationship of the Maryland State Arts Council as a division of the Maryland Department of Economic Development may serve as a model.

Lead Agency: AHCMC
Timeline: 2001 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Develop language about AHCMC programs and activities that relate to the economic impact of local cultural activities.
- AHCMC Executive Director should meet periodically with the Director of the Department of Economic Development to discuss ways of interrelating programs and activities.

10.5 As the programs, services and activities of the Arts and Humanities Council grow and develop, the AHCMC board should ensure that adequate staffing levels are available to support the agency.

Staff may be the most important resource available to the Arts and Humanities Council. Even with modest financial resources, AHCMC has become a potent shaper of the community's cultural destiny over the past five years. The commitment and energy of the staff, combined with the vision of the board, has made that possible. But, it would be an error to believe that the future of the agency can rest on the willingness of the staff to take on ever-increasing responsibilities. Ultimately, staff burnout will occur if the staffing levels do not grow with the program expansion. The accomplishments to date have been impressive. It is important to acknowledge the hard work that has brought the agency to this point. The workload associated with a significant number of small grants is virtually identical with the workload associated with a significant number of large grants. All of the essential tasks must be performed in either case. This is true of most of the programs currently administered by the Arts and Humanities Council. Any major expansion of the services of AHCMC must be accompanied with an expansion of the professional staff. It is useful to look at the results of the multi-county study. Comparable county cultural agencies have an average staff of nearly 17; AHCMC has four.

Lead Agency: AHCMC Board of Directors
Timeline: 2002 and ongoing
Initial Step:

- Study each proposed program expansion to determine the professional staffing needed to support the activity.

B. Health and Human Services Department: FINDINGS

The Director of the County Department of Health and Human Services, Charles Short, expressed a desire for a more formalized approach by HHS to utilize arts in therapy and education in the areas of mental health, programs for individuals with disabilities, and services for the aging. He believes that there should be special funding for arts and humanities groups that develop programs that reach out to these special populations. He would welcome an arts coordinator in the department who would work with HHS employees to identify opportunities for collaboration with arts and humanities organizations. Mr. Short expressed concern that arts and culture seem to be elitist activities rather than essential human activities that should be available to all residents, including the clients of HHS.

There are numerous examples in other jurisdictions of nonprofit groups bringing the arts to these populations. Some county groups, including Round House Theatre, Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts, and Arts for the Aging, already are providing this type of service. An arts coordinator would add focus to this effort and facilitate the expansion of services.

B. Health and Human Services Department: RECOMMENDATIONS

10.6 The Department of Health and Human Services should budget for and hire a professional arts coordinator to identify financial and programmatic resources to integrate the arts into the service delivery systems of that department.

Lead Agency: Department of Health and Human Services
Timeline: FY 2003 and ongoing
Initial Steps:

- Include request for funding in departmental budget for FY 2003.
- Develop job specifications in coordination with AHCMC.

Initial Implementation Steps

In May 2000, the County Council took action on the *County Executive's Recommended FY2000-2001 Operating Budget.* In doing so, the Council acknowledged and expressed support for several initiatives recommended in the *Draft Plan*. First, the Council advised the Arts and Humanities Council that an increase in the funding level in future years would depend on seeing the grants program restructured. Then they committed a level amount of funding for grants programs in FY2001. The objectives of restructuring the grants program, as recommended in the *Draft*, are to combine the arts and humanities into a consolidated grants program; to expand the availability of grants to a wider group of organizations and individuals, and to protect and enhance the grant opportunities of current grantees. This restructuring process got underway in September 2000 and resulted in the publication of revised grant guidelines and application forms in January 2001.

Second, the County Council strongly agreed with and provided funding to implement the recommendations concerning business planning and technical assistance for fundraising. They appropriated $37,500 for the Arts and Humanities Council to assist arts and humanities groups in the preparation of business plans. This assistance is targeted to organizations that are planning and building major capital improvements. Implementation of this program will take place during the spring of 2001. Citing the need for organizations to find more private funding, the Council also appropriated $50,000 for technical assistance to improve the fundraising skills of arts and humanities groups. These funds already are being put to use paying for workshops and training opportunities for staff and volunteer representatives of arts and humanities organizations.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS FOR PERFORMING ARTS SPACES SINCE "Creative Montgomery" THE 2001 CULTURAL PLAN

Submitted November 20, 2009

INTRODUCTION

In response to a recent inquiry about the Blair Auditorium, AHCMC has revisited the County's Cultural Plan, *Creative Montgomery* (The Plan), which was completed in May 2001. The 2001 Cultural Plan examined cultural facilities that were both available and "in progress" at that time. The Plan noted that new facilities that were being planned and built in 2001 *"will provide additional space for performances, but they will not substantially increase the performance venues for those groups who rely on rental space."*

The Plan observed that

- *"There is a demonstrated lack of available high quality theatrical performance rental space. Rental space is needed to serve the many emerging and mid-sized cultural organizations and larger local groups that do not have dedicated rehearsal and performance venues, as well as for small national touring acts.*
- *Many groups have attempted to use high school auditoria for their programs. However the results have been generally reported as disappointing. Performing arts groups report issues of availability, the schools' inappropriate size and technical accommodation of their audience and productions, as well as the difficulties of negotiating use during times that compete with school activities. Schools are reportedly used as a last resort if other space is not available. While the Silver Spring Intermediate School project could address some this need, that facility possesses many limitations."*

The Plan concluded that *"[G]given the un-addressed needs of existing and new groups in the community who rely on rental space, two additional 450-seat multi-user theaters are needed. Potential locations for these include eastern Montgomery County and Gaithersburg."*

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The 2001 Cultural Plan also noted the extensive growth of nonprofit arts and humanities groups in the County finding that:

> *"During research completed as part of the planning process, it became evident that there are more then 250 nonprofit organizations contributing to the county's cultural life. Research also found that half of the organizations were founded since 1984. Not surprisingly, the larger organizations tended to be the older organizations."*

The Plan also described the growing ethnic diversity of the county and the contributions of these residents to the county's cultural life.

"Within the current life of Montgomery County, there are a growing number of different ethnic communities that present their particular artistic expression and aesthetic. By all accounts, this growth in the immigrant and culturally specific populations will continue to make a significant impact on cultural offerings in the area."

Another aspect of the cultural environment is the reluctance of patrons who live in one region of the county to travel to another region for their cultural experiences. The Plan noted:

"Transportation is a very significant issue in the county. . . . During the planning process, county residents who live beyond the communities that immediately abut DC expressed an unwillingness to travel to DC in the evenings to attend cultural events. Although residents of Bethesda and Silver Spring may find it equally convenient to attend events in DC or in Montgomery County, residents of outlying areas, where population is rapidly growing, are looking for events closer to home."

UPDATE

In the almost nine years since the Cultural Plan was completed, the county has seen:

- an enormous growth in cultural facilities
- a significant increase in the up-county population
- a significant increase in the diversity of its population in general and its cultural organizations in particular.

Facilities Update

Since 2001, several facilities have opened that have some capacity for rental usage. These include:

1. Olney Theatre; Olney completed its remodeling and added a new main stage. The historic main stage and their Gudelsky Theatre lab space are available for rental and are being used by community performing groups, including Bel Cantanti Opera and Act Two Performing Arts, two new organizations that did not exist at the time the Plan was undertaken.
2. Round House Theatre; after moving into its new space in Bethesda and Silver Spring, RHT is offering the black box theatre in Silver Spring for rentals when it is not being used for RHT's own productions.
3. The BlackRock Center for the Arts; located in Germantown, BlackRock has a small black box space suitable for dance that seats about 120, and a fully-equipped theatre that seats about 240. These are available for rental when not being used for BlackRock's own programs.
4. The Performing Arts Center at Montgomery College, Silver Spring; recently opened, the center includes both a black box theatre and a fully-equipped 500-seat theatre. The latter is now available for rentals.
5. The Arts Barn at the Kentlands; operated by the City of Gaithersburg, the Arts Barn includes a 99-seat theatre available to local groups for performances.

Cultural Environment Update

AHCMC's grants staff estimates that there are now approximately 400 nonprofit arts and humanities groups in Montgomery County, compared to the 250 noted in the Plan in 2001. Much of this extraordinary growth is attributable to culturally-specific organizations that reflect the continued growth in the county's cultural diversity. For example, grant applications have been received recently from the Cambodian Buddhist Cultural Group, Nrityanjali Inc. and Kuchipudi Kalanidhi, two Indian dance troupes. These and other groups that reflect a culturally-specific art form are recent entries on the cultural scene in the county.

The largest growth spurt is occurring in small and mid-size organizations, defined as those under $150,000 in annual expenses. This is the type of organization that typically does not have a venue of its own and that relies on rental space for rehearsals and performances.

CONCLUSION

There is a need for a multi-user 450-seat theater available for rental in the Gaithersburg or upper Montgomery County area. The redevelopment planned to take place around the Shady Grove Metro Station represents an opportunity for this need to be met.

A new theater in the up-county region is needed for the following reasons:

- The Plan stated the need for facilities in eastern Montgomery County and Gaithersburg. With the availability of new rental spaces at the Olney Theatre and at Montgomery College Silver Spring, it appears that this need is being addressed in the eastern Montgomery County region.
- While the Plan stated a need for a facility in Gaithersburg, the county has grown even further north from there since 2001. Thus, areas north of Gaithersburg should also be considered for a new theater.
- BlackRock Center for the Arts, although located in the up-county area, does not completely fill the need for a rental space. While that space definitely has added more opportunities for organizations to rent space, BlackRock's facilities are available for rental only when BlackRock is not presenting its own programming.
- The Plan did not find a need for a larger performance space. It noted that the proposal for renovation of the auditorium at the Silver Spring Intermediate School possesses many limitations. Among those difficulties is the challenge of scheduling rehearsals and performances in a space shared with a school and the high cost of renting a large auditorium that most likely will not be filled.
- A 450-seat rental theater addresses the needs of the fastest growing segment of Montgomery County's cultural community, that is, small and mid-size organizations. A larger space is not financially feasible. Each user that rents a theater must take into account the number of tickets that can be sold and the cost of the facility. Also, many contracts for the rights to a copyrighted show assess royalties on the basis of the number of seats and many have a breaking point at about 500 seats. All of these costs must be balanced in the equation of staging a production that does not lose money.
- The demand for rentals at the current facilities that seat 450 – 500 patrons is very high. There appears to be more demand than those facilities can handle. As more nonprofit organizations are formed, it is evident that the demand for performing space will grow.

- Location is important. As the Plan noted, patrons are not willing to travel long distances to attend cultural events. Facilities are needed throughout the county to serve all of the county's residents.
- Access to public transportation and major highways also are important. The extraordinary success of Strathmore in the five years it has been open is testament to the importance of easy access by public transportation and by car. The potential for dual use of a Metro garage by commuters and cultural consumers, as occurs at Strathmore, also exists at the Shady Grove Metro Station.

For more information about this Needs Assessment feel free to contact Fran Abrams, Grants Director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County at 301-565-3805 X22 or Suzan Jenkins, CEO of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County at 301-565-3805 X23

Setting The Stage

Planning for a Cultural Plan in Montgomery County, MD

by Todd W. Bressi

Community Research
arts & humanities
council of montgomery county

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Evolving Conditions 4

Demographics 4

Changing Context 4

Intersectionality 6

AHCMC Values 7

Setting The Stage 8

Defining Arts and Culture 8

Mapping Cultural Assets 10

Economic Impact 12

Key Observations 12

Implications 14

Appendices 15

Appendix 1: Arts and Culture Funding Snapshot 15

Appendix 2: Bibliography 15

Appendix 3: Creative Placemaking Theory of Change 15

Setting The Stage
Planning for a Cultural Plan in Montgomery County, MD

by Todd W. Bressi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County Staff
Suzan Jenkins, CEO
Joe Frandoni, Deputy Director
Flannery Winchester, Public Art Manager

Community Research Consultants
MJR Partners
CivicArts
Imani Drayton-Hill

1. Introduction: Setting the Stage for a Cultural Plan

It has been more than 20 years since Montgomery County completed a countywide cultural plan. The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) is now preparing to undertake a new one, following recommendations in the *Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan* adopted by the County Council and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) Planning Board.

Much has changed in the last twenty years:

- The **County's demographics** have changed: though its population has grown about one percent per year, its non-white population has grown by approximately 80 percent, to the point where 60 percent of the County's population is non-white.[1]
- The **philosophy of cultural planning** has changed: There is less focus on arts and culture organizations and on the economic impact of the arts and culture sector, and more focus on a community's overall creative and cultural life.[2]
- There has been an awakening to the **intersectionality** between the arts and culture sector and a broad range of public services, from civic engagement and voting to environmental, placemaking and transportation projects.
- **AHCMC's vision, values and priorities** have evolved as it completed two strategic planning processes, adopted racial equity principles and navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. AHCMC has shifted its grantmaking emphasis towards empowering smaller and non-traditional organizations, emphasizing general operating support and reorienting its evaluative criteria more heavily towards community impact. This evolution towards equity, community impact, and emergency response and preparedness position's AHCMC to lead conversations concerning power and representation in arts and culture policy.

Recognizing these changes, AHCMC concluded it should conduct preliminary research that would provide a fresh context for its upcoming cultural planning process. This context would help AHCMC position the plan externally, moving arts and culture stakeholders, County leadership, and the public at-large beyond inherited notions about what a cultural plan might mean. Additionally, this context would help AHCMC with the internal management of the planning process by informing the goals of the plan, the selection of a consultant and the research and engagement approaches.

AHCMC began by reviewing recently published literature that focuses on the cultural planning process, analyzing several recently completed cultural plans and interviewing cultural agency leaders in several comparable cities and regions. That review helped AHCMC focus on specific research questions that would provide a broader understanding of arts, culture, and creativity in Montgomery County, from the point of view of arts stakeholders and from an understanding of the broader community's lived experiences and practices.

In 2022 AHCMC launched three research projects that were focused on:

1. Eliciting residents' perceptions of what "arts and culture" means.
2. Identifying and mapping arts and culture assets and resources in the county.
3. Demonstrating the evolution of the county's arts and culture network through an analysis of AHCMC's grantmaking

AHCMC expected the research to provide a fresh foundation for a new cultural plan grounded in both the needs of arts and humanities organizations and practitioners, and an understanding of how arts, culture and creativity enters the lived experience of county residents. This understanding would help ensure the planning effort would be relevant to the County's newest and most diverse communities, provide a context for evaluating the directions and priorities that have been embraced in AHCMC's strategic plans and grantmaking over the past decade, and offer a platform for understanding how a wider variety of County resources could be joined to support the community's creative life. It was also hoped that the process of developing this research would continue AHCMC's long-term community relationship building, a critical undertaking for the upcoming planning process.

This introduction summarizes those research projects and puts their findings into context to set the stage for organizing Montgomery County's next cultural plan.

[1] This information is compiled from the Thrive Demographic Summary and population data published by the St. Louis Federal Reserve (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MDMONT0POP)

[2] Tom Borrup, "40 Years Young: The Evolving Practice of Cultural Planning," *Artsblog*, Posted November 8, 2018

2. Evolving Conditions

Montgomery County's Demographic Context

The *Thrive 2050* General Plan update outlined significant changes in the County's demographics in the past half century, as well as clear patterns of communities that remain geographically, economically, and socially isolated as a result of past patterns of discrimination.[3]

Montgomery County is home to some of the most culturally diverse places in the United States, including Silver Spring, Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown. The county's population has grown more diverse over the last sixty years because of a steady influx of foreign-born immigrants. Since the last cultural plan was undertaken, the most dramatic shift has been a decrease in the percentage of the white population from 60 percent to 40 percent (with a relatively even breakdown of Black, Hispanic and Asian-American / Pacific Islander populations). At the same time, the County's overall population grew from 840,000 to 1.05 million.[4]

Thrive also noted that past patterns of discrimination have left many communities geographically, economically, and socially isolated. Black communities, in particular, historically suffered from a lack of public investment in infrastructure such as new roads, sewer and water, schools, health clinics, and other public amenities and services. Some communities were hurt by the urban renewal policies of the 1960s. Others faced pressure to sell their houses or farms to developers for new subdivisions.

Thrive noted that these disparities lag to this day:

> ***Today communities with high concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities also show lagging median household incomes, not because of their race or ethnicity but because of financial precarity due to low-wage jobs, high rates of being uninsured, declining business starts and lack of housing are experienced to a greater degree because of past and institutionalized discriminatory practices. Not surprising is the resulting gaps in quality-of-life indicators seen among many Black, Hispanic, and Asian residents.[5]***

Changing Context for Cultural Planning

The philosophy of arts and culture planning has changed significantly over the past twenty years. The most important change has been a shift in emphasis towards exploring community interests rather than primarily focusing on the needs of traditional arts and cultural sector actors, or instrumentalized goals such as economic development or "placemaking."

In a 1994 field scan of cultural plans, scholar-practitioner Craig Dreezen noted,

> ***With some notable exceptions, most cultural planning centers upon the interests of arts organizations, arts audiences, and artists. Some plans focus on the arts and assert no pretensions to transform communities. Others purport to plan for the entire community, but are concerned with that community mostly for its potential support of the arts.[6]***

Not long after that, a groundbreaking study led by Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson (the current chair of the National Endowment for the Arts) argued for a change in how communities approached the question of, "How are arts, culture, and creativity defined, presented, and valued at the neighborhood level?" The study proposed four guiding principles that could guide cultural planning work:

- Definitions of art, culture, and creativity depend on the cultural values, preferences, and realities of residents and other stakeholders in each community.
- Arts, culture, and creative expression are infused with multiple meanings and purposes simultaneously.
- The concept of participation includes a wide array of ways in which people engage in arts, culture, and creative expression.
- Opportunities for participation in arts, culture, and creative endeavor often rely on both arts-specific and non-arts- specific resources.

[3] Thrive's data shows that the demographic shifts identified in the AHCMC 2016 cultural plan have continued, even as the rate of population increase has slowed.

[4] The changes from 1960 to 2020 are even more dramatic; in 1960 the County's population was 96 percent white, with most of the other residents being Black, and only 340,000 people, compared to 40 percent white and 1.05 million people in 2020.

[5] The preceding three paragraphs are cited from Thrive 2050, pp. 11-13, with minor clarifications.

[6] As quoted in Tom Borrup, "40 Years Young: The Evolving Practice of Cultural Planning," in Artsblog (Washhington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, November 8, 2018).

By 2017, the landscape of cultural planning had shifted dramatically. Scholar-practitioner Tom Borrup conducted an analysis of fifty recent cultural plans and found that:

> ***The data reveal that expectations of cultural planning have increased significantly over these 20-plus years, and that the greatest change is in the emphasis on serving community interests rather than a focus on the arts and cultural sector's own needs.***[7]

Yet cultural planning still lagged in important ways. Despite the findings of the Urban Land Institute's 2003 report on cultural planning research methodologies, Borrup found:

> ***Definitions of "culture" as expressed by the range of community resources included in plans also expanded, but not as inclusively as the public has come to understand culture, according to outside marketing research.***

This finding indicates, perhaps, that while cultural planners understood that they had to think more broadly about the meaning of arts and culture, they had not yet embraced processes that would authentically connect with communities about their "cultural values, preferences, and realities" or identify ways of cultivating "both arts-specific and non-arts-specific resources." Not surprisingly, Borrup also found:

> ***Where cultural plans also set their sights, but where outcomes fell short, is in the area of cultural equity—expanding resources for under-represented groups including immigrant populations, removing barriers to participation, and bolstering education and youth development. Fewer than half of cultural plans included specific actions to address diversity, equity, and inclusion—a surprising finding in 2017.***

AHCMC's informal scan of city and county arts and culture plans, in preparation of this research, found that while most plans now specifically discuss diversity, equity and inclusion, they stubbornly remain wedded to a focus primarily on the needs of traditional arts and culture organizations and goals such as economic development. One notable exception is the City of Oakland's cultural plan, which offers this message to the city:

> ***Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan ... illustrates the vibrant and diverse ways our city understands itself as a community of creativity and care—and how we envision the path forward to maintain our unique identity. It gives voice to the idea that we all belong to each other as Oaklanders and affirms that our civic well-being is deeply rooted in Oakland's long- term artistic and cultural health. ... Its goal is to ensure that the people of Oakland not only feel a sense of belonging in the city and to each other, but know that the city belongs to them.***[8]

Oakland's plan offers the following premises:[9]

- A recognition that Oakland's cultural vibrancy exists in all sectors, in all neighborhoods, and in all communities;
- An understanding that the health of cultural life is inextricably tied to the existence and quality of *cultural spaces* (spaces intended for production, enactment, and/or sharing of culture, whether non-profit, for-profit, or something in between), *neighborhood places* (places people find to exercise their cultural expression and build identity), and the *civic cultural commons* (public areas and structures where people gather, connect, celebrate, learn, and build community); and
- The necessity to work across government and collaborate with City colleagues to effectively promote cultural equity.

Belonging in Oakland is perhaps the most advanced example of this new perspective on cultural planning—and the role of government support of a community's cultural life:

> ***Cultural Affairs must redefine the domain of its work—moving from a myopic focus on the non-profit arts sector to a purview that more accurately reflects the reality of where cultural life takes place.***

Oakland's plan is reflective of an idea that has recently emerged in the context of cultural policy, "belonging." As described by Evan Bissell in Notes on *Cultural Strategy for Belonging*:

---

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Mayor Libby Schaaf, "A Message from the Mayor," in Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan (City of Oakland, 2018).

[9] *Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan* (City of Oakland, 2018).

> ***In a foundational article called "The Problem of Othering," the Hass Institute's john a. powell and Stephen Menendian describe belonging as " An unwavering commitment to not simply tolerating and respecting difference, but to ensuring that all people are welcome and feel that they belong in the society." They continue that this "must be more than expressive; it must be institutionalized as well." A culture of belonging must inhabit stories, symbols and how we see ourselves and each other. It also must inhabit the systems, policies and practices of society that make up the substance of culture."*** [10]

The arts, culture and humanities are essential to this process because, powell argues, "People largely organize themselves and operate around stories and beliefs, not around facts. Culture can move people in ways that policies cannot." For that reason, cultural policy and cultural planning can be acts of civic engagement, connection and ultimately empowerment—essential to "organiz(ing) our space, our structures and our policies to do the work we need to build the world we want to live in." [11]

Intersectionality

In 2010, the Mayors Institute on City Design (MICD) published a seminal white paper, *Creative Placemaking*—coining an eponymous term that has resonated through the arts, culture and community development worlds (and inspired countless iterations, such as "creative placekeeping"). The paper introduces the concept in the following way:

> ***In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.***[12]

Linking the arts to broader public needs and processes was by no means a new idea; decades earlier the Ford Foundation had seeded initiatives to situate arts activities within community development corporations with economic development and social service missions. Mainstream organizations such as MICD and the Urban Land Institute, and advocacy groups such as Project for Public Spaces, had for many years created roles for artists in community planning processes.

But this paper crystallized that thinking, attached a theory of change and impelled funders to support initiatives proposed at the community level.[13] Not long after the paper was published, the National Endowment for the Arts launched the "Our Town" grant program (which specifically requires collaborations with local government), and several major national philanthropies joined to create ArtPlace America, a ten-year initiative to catalyze, document and rigorously evaluate these efforts.

Some early manifestations of creative placemaking were critiqued for being insensitive to the communities where projects were located. It was argued that some placemaking projects were ignoring the inherent value of communities already in place, overlooking their needs and potentially promoting their displacement. Another critique has been that creative placemaking can instrumentalize arts and culture. In this critique, artists and arts organizations are viewed as a means to achieve an end, but not as a resource for questioning the ends themselves. Dialogue about these issues has led to strategies for leadership and empowerment that allow for creative placemaking to be driven by people in under-resourced communities and to promote economic and social change.

Fifteen years after the white paper was published, it can be said that one of the greatest accomplishments of the "creative placemaking" movement is that it has garnered broad acceptance for the idea of intersectionality—that artists, arts and culture organizations, and the ideas of the arts and culture world can play a catalytic role in how public agencies go about their work.[14] Similarly, the movement has shined fresh light on the imbalances in cultural, economic and political power that have shaped (and continue to shape) our communities. It validated artists and arts organizations as espected voices in the public sphere, and along with that the ability to imagine futures beyond those offered by the status quo.

---

[10] Evan Bissell, *Notes on Cultural Strategy for Belonging* (Berkeley: Haas Institute, 2019), 8-9
[11] Ibid., 7
[12] Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*, (Washington, D.C., Mayors Institute on City Design, 2010), 3
[13] For the Theory of Change, see Markusen and Gadwa, 3. A diagram is attached to the end of this report.

AHCMC's Evolving Vision, Values and Goals

Finally, over the past fifteen years, AHCMC has set a trajectory for responding to the County's increasing economic and social complexity and for rethinking its approach to the County's cultural needs. This trajectory is reflected in the strategic plans it completed in 2008 and 2017, the set of racial equity principles that it adopted in 2018 to guide its work, and the continued re-alignment of its grant programs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of funding, AHCMCs first major step was to partner with the County Council to eliminate "earmarks," for large arts organizations (which are often the most politically connected). Increasingly, AHCMC has focused its grant programs on general operating awards (based on field learnings that general operating grants play a strong role in helping organizations build long-term capacity by providing comprehensive support) and on the need to help organizations weather the COVID-19 crisis. It has focused on building a ladder of grant opportunities that provides support to groups of all sizes and allows small organizations without formal non-profit designations to apply for project grants. These changes allowed AHCMC to distribute funding more widely, and with fewer conditions, providing more resources to organizations serving the County's newest communities and those who had not been recognized in the past.

In 2018, AHCMC adopted a set of racial equity principles to guide its work:

> ***Brave conversations:*** ***The path to racial equity is fraught with deep-seated emotion and conflicting perspectives. As leaders, we will create cultures where learning is valued above being right and where individuals are invited to bring their whole, vulnerable selves to the conversation.***
>
> ***With Us, Not for Us:*** ***The path to racial equity is a continuous effort that must actively facilitate self-representation, meaningful input, leadership, and shared decision-making with those who have lived the experience of being in the groups we seek to know and serve through partnership***
>
> ***Power Sharing:*** ***Reaching racial equity cannot be possible unless we recognize and challenge power imbalances within our communities and professional structures. … We will question socio-historical contexts and structural factors that will hopefully lead to community-driven, shared leadership with a balance of power amongst all partners.***

These principles provide a significant platform for AHCMC to lead conversations about what racial equity means in the context of arts and culture funding and policy. These principles open the door for addressing the gap that Borrup noticed in his research: that the arts and culture field's leadership understood the importance of embracing diversity and equity in its work, but planning processes had not yet embraced processes that would authentically connect with communities about their "cultural values, preferences, and realities."

As AHCMC's equity principles note, that process will require brave and honest conversations, self-representation of the groups who are being served, and a recognition of structural imbalances in power that result in structural challenges in access to resources.

[14] For example, the Los Angeles County Cultural Affairs "Creative Strategist" program embeds artists in a variety of County agencies, not only to help them interface with the public in order to deliver their programs and services, but also to rethink their priorities and plans.

3. Setting the Stage: Putting Arts and Culture in Perspective

To prepare for the County's upcoming cultural plan, AHCMC launched three research projects that were focused on the following questions:

- How do people in Montgomery County define what "arts and culture" means to them?
- What are the arts and culture assets that are important to people in their lives, and where are they located geographically in the County?
- What does AHCMC's record of grantmaking indicate about the nature and needs of the County's arts, humanities and cultural organizations?

What do "Arts" and "Culture" Mean?

AHCMC retained Margie Johnson Reese Partners (MJR), a Dallas-based cultural planning consultancy that was part of the team that worked on the County's first cultural plan, to undertake research on and develop a working definition of "arts and culture" as understood by people in Montgomery County. MJR took its task as considering "institutional definitions and meanings of art" as well as "the historical, conventional, and appreciative ways that people make art as a form of cultural sustainability."

MJR's research process involved several approaches: reviewing relevant background reports and studies to refresh the team's knowledge about the County; individual and group conversations; an online survey; and community conversations led by local artist facilitators specially trained for the task.[15]

Early in its work, MJR simplified the central research question to "How do you define art?" MJR's report makes an important distinction between "art" and "culture" that has also been broadly articulated in arts and culture planning research:

> ***Though the line between the two may be a fine one, there are differences. "Art" is broadly viewed as the creative expression of ideas, emotions, experiences and other human states and qualities. "Culture" is a tapestry of beliefs, customs, heritage and social forms. The arts are an expression of culture, so understanding how people define and make art helps us understand why sustaining culture is important.***

MJR's engagement process revealed several themes:

- **Art is (or should be) inclusive and reinforce a sense of belonging and connection.** Art is "expressions of thoughts and feelings in multiple media accessing our senses that hopefully evoke more empathy, understanding, connection, conversation, thoughts, perspective and joy."
- **Art is a form of self-expression rooted in humanity and communication.** Art is "creative expression, beauty, new perspectives, inspiration, shared humanity"
- **Art is a way to celebrate and sustain culture or heritage.** Art is "a reflection of contemporary feeling, storytelling of the community."
- **Art is an avenue for exploration, creation and innovation.** "Art is the result of getting to the edge of the cliff but not falling over—knowing how to get to that scary place over and over so you can hold the hand of the audience and help them see further than they could have."

Further synthesizing the findings, MJR offered the following summary definition. Montgomery County residents define art as:

> ***"A process of creating or making something of personal or cultural relevance that celebrates or sustains heritage, reflects or challenges ideas/values, investigates innovation, and occurs in or reflects spaces that feel familiar and reinforces a feeling of belonging or its absence."***

[15] It should be noted that face-to-face engagement occurred at a time when meeting approaches and protocols were still responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

MJR's report also shared other cross-cutting observations about the County's arts and culture sector from input gathered during the engagement process:

- **Accessibility.** Participants discussed access challenges to arts programs as they relate to physical barriers for seniors and both people with physical disabilities, as well as access challenges related to financial limitations, availability, and socio-economic status.
- **Inclusion.** Arts leaders described inclusion as a goal related to developing diverse audiences; non-arts participants described inclusion as a desire to be viewed as a valued contributor to the cultural landscape of the County.
- **Equity.** Leaders of the County's largest arts and culture institutions sought a finite definition of equity; many raised concerns that their funding from the County would be reduced if it were dependent on meeting an "unstated" equity goal. Art makers and culture keepers in communities of color consider equity an often-unattainable moving target.
- **Cultural Heritage.** Participants articulated the concept of *cultural heritage* as the unique, intangible expression of inherited traditions and the quest to teach and share those traditions for the sake of future generations.
- **Affinity and Allyship.** Leaders of culturally-specific organizations and community-based groups discussed the importance of *affinity* and *allyship*. *Affinity* means belonging, sharing common interests and goals, and, in some cases, cultural heritage. *Allyship* means a process by which those in power use their voices to advocate for under-represented groups.

Individual leaders of culturally-specific organizations and community-based groups expressed clear concerns about the investment and support necessary for programs that focus on cultural sustainability. They expressed two parallel goals: First, education in culturally-diverse art forms (particularly the performing arts) is a way to sustain and advance a community's cultural heritage for future generations. Second, amplifying and investing in the organizations that promote these cultural traditions, not only in small venues and at neighborhood festivals, is integral to the broader cultural ecosystem of the County. Additionally, they noted, efforts to strengthen the infrastructure of culturally-specific organizations and groups could broaden the public's experience and understanding of these cultural traditions, beyond what they might encounter in a one-month celebration or occasional projects.

MJR's research illuminated parallel conversations that should be recognized in the forthcoming cultural planning process—one reflecting individual artistic spirit (which occurs within a broader cultural context), and the other reflecting inherited cultural practices.

One is a conversation that considers arts and culture as relatively similar terms, referencing the expression of ideas:

> ***Something that is aesthetically pleasing or done to create an emotional response, or to comment on the human condition, politics, society, or our relationship to the natural environment.***
>
> ***A visual expression of an idea … that is filled with emotion, is powerfully and enticingly expressed, and has universal meaning***

The other is a conversation in which artistic and cultural practices are embedded in the broader traditions of a community, must be practiced to sustain the cultural life of that community, and lose their meaning when extracted from the community. This idea of arts and culture is critical to a sense of welcome, belonging, connection and cultural survival.

Mapping the County's Cultural Life

AHCMC retained Civic Arts, an Austin-based cultural planning consultancy, to explore how the county's art, culture and humanities assets might be identified, mapped and understood as a network that supports the creative life of county residents. The question Civic Arts set out to understand was, "Where do Montgomery County residents go to experience and express creativity and culture?"

This research question is related to a growing field called "cultural asset mapping." While asset mapping is a conventional technique in many types of planning processes, in cultural planning there has been an emphasis on using mapping as a visual tool to elicit deeper information about communities' own cultural practices, networks and geographies. In this way, asset mapping can offer a counterpoint to "official" data, such as Census business classification data or even lists of grant applications.

Also, cultural asset mapping falls at a unique intersection between quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitatively, cultural asset mapping is an inventory of ***specific points*** of a community's cultural facilities and creative resources. Qualitatively, the community conversations that support the mapping process require a discussion of what "artistic, cultural and creative value" actually ***means*** to a particular community, at that particular time. Issues of meaning and interpretation must be balanced with the work to name specific and quantifiable points in order to get the fullest understanding of what the data is saying.

Civic Arts' research process involved several approaches:

- **Evaluation of existing data sets about art and culture resources (described below).**
- **Community convenings.**[16] A local partner and twelve Community Conveners (people who were artists, arts educators or in arts-supportive professions) were trained by and worked with Civic Arts to develop research and engagement approaches, which included on-line mapping meetings; pop-ups at places like farmers markets, community gatherings and shopping areas; and individual, one-on-one meetings. [17]
- **Online portal.** Civic Arts developed an on-line platform, Maptionnaire, that gave on-line participants the capacity to not only answer a specific series of questions, but also to name a specific site that came to mind or indicate a broader area of the County that they associated with some form of personal creative and cultural expression.

This research highlighted two separate cultural geographies in Montgomery County: a geography of traditional arts-sector resources and an emergent geography of community-based creative and cultural life.

- One geography is **"Traditional Venues."** The specific points for these traditional venues were collected from existing datasets, including County GIS sources, AHCMC grantee information and readily available data from Google Maps using key cultural sector search terms such as "gallery" and "theater." These sources yielded 332 data points for places where people experience art and creativity—ranging from familiar and widely-known venues such as Strathmore and movie theaters to art supply stores, galleries, museum and dance studios. These fall primarily along major arterials and within primary population centers within the county.
- The other geography is specific points of interest identified by the Community Conveners' engagement activities (**"Community Identified Points of Culture and Creativity"**). This process yielded 205 data points reflecting places where people say they experience art and creativity in their everyday lives. These are places where people gather to share, create and enjoy the way creativity and culture come into being within their own lives, the lives of their families and the lives of their communities. These places are distributed widely throughout the County with clustering around areas with major population concentrations.

[16] When direct community work started in late spring of 2022 it was quickly realized that many of the same civic engagement techniques that were used in the cultural planning work before the COVID-19 pandemic were not going to work as they previously had. People's comfort levels around gathering, their desire to engage in civic issues, and their day-to-day priorities around when to gather had all radically shifted.

[17] Examples of the types of meetings held by Community Conveners included: Social media outreach with specific graphics and videos; on-line research into different area communities; promotion of on-line portal through Facebook Live presentations; distribution of information at different sites of arts training and education, at arts performances, at local area grocery stores, and Spanish-speaking areas; visits to local businesses (as identified by various creative communities) for flyer distribution and insight; presentations at houses of worship; pop-up events at parks and public spaces; in-person attendance at craft and making gatherings; on-line one-on-one interviews and focus groups; community gatherings organized specifically for this project.

Recognizing that there is a qualitative dimension to the learnings about community-identified assets, Civic Arts further refined them into four categories:

- **Creative Expression:** Spaces where people gather to share out (formally or informally) the type of creative expression that they enjoy making or that connects them. Examples include the Bombay Bistro in Rockville and comedy night at the Silver Branch Brewing Company.
- **Collective Creative Making:** Spaces where people gather to both learn from each other and enjoy the experience of community around a favorite form of culture or creativity. This includes spaces such as community quilting and fiber arts circles (Friendship Start Quilters Workshops, Potomac Fiber Arts Guild), informal acoustic music jams, and camera clubs.
- **Community Events and Gatherings:** Compared to cultural activities that are more formally organized, these spaces tend to be either smaller and/or places where people engage in modes of creative expression not typically recognized within the traditional arts-community. These include role playing, ice skating (Veterans Plaza), skateboarding (K-Town Skate Spotz) and the NeedleChasers biennial quilt show.
- **Connecting with "Other," together:** This final categorization is harder to define. Many people identified places of creative and cultural expression that touched broadly on experiences of religion, spirituality or connection with nature; sometimes individual experiences, but often in groups. These include the choir at St. Rose of Lima parish in Gaithersburg, practicing yoga at sunset, mindfulness meditation gatherings, walking in Brookside Gardens. The researchers labeled these resources as places where people feel connected to the "Other"—someone or something that is both greater than and outside of one's self.

The data yielded three specific insights:

- **Distributed Geography of Creativity and Culture:** Traditional cultural assets and community-identified cultural assets do not share the same geography. Traditional cultural assets tend to fall along major corridors and within major population areas. Community-identified cultural assets are spread more broadly throughout the county, reflecting day-to-day relationships between residents and their own forms of cultural production. These different sets of points seem to work in a complementary fashion, and together provide a very broad picture of cultural access within the county.
- **An Expansive Geography of Arts and Culture:** The two data sets barely overlapped. Of the 332 traditional cultural assets and the 205 community-identified assets, six percent of the points overlapped. In other words, while residents do associate traditional arts venues with creative and cultural production, they do not associate such venues with their own creative expression. This suggests that by considering how arts and culture activities are manifested in the lives of residents as well as how the arts manifest within traditional cultural organizations, the geography of arts and culture expands dramatically.
- **Shift from Different Types of Media to Different Types of Relationships:** While traditional cultural assets could be divided into traditional classical understandings of creative media (dance, visual arts, literary, theater, literary, etc.), the community-identified assets grouped more into categories that could be better understood in terms of **relationships** (relationships between producers and producers, productions and receivers, producers and "other"). In other words, the focus of meaning shifted from the type of thing being expressed, to the relationship in which something was produced.

From both the mapped data and the reflections and observations of Community Conveners, the team concluded that local creative gatherings are experientially distinct from the traditional artistic venues, organizations and programs that are more commonly supported by public funding. The three specific insights that emerged from the mapping of community data point to a lived experience of creativity and culture within the county that is culturally based, closer to home and focused on the development of connections with local neighbors.

4. AHCMC: Economic Impact of the Arts, and AHCMC Grantmaking

AHCMC retained Imani Drayton, an economist based in Takoma Park, to explore three questions related to the economic impact of the investment that Montgomery County has made into the arts and economic sector—particularly the impact on local business development, tourism and community revitalization. As the research plan developed, AHCMC and Drayton posited several specific questions to explore:

- Does the presence of arts organizations in a high physical density area with high employment levels lead to a multiplier effect for economic development?
- Does the presence of arts activities in low-income areas reduce crime, graffiti, and vandalism?
- Does arts education in low socioeconomic schools increase graduation rates, improve STEAM scores and close achievement gaps?
- Does the presence of arts activity/organizations attract attendance from outside the county?
- Do arts organizations contribute to the development/attraction/retention of a skilled workforce?
- Have residential property values near arts activity increased at the same or greater rates than other areas of the county, of Maryland?
- Have arts investment attracted creative businesses?

However, several months into the research process, it became clear that it would be near-impossible to generate quantitative findings on these questions. This is largely because existing data sources are simply not robust enough to look at these questions historically. Also, there are questions about whether the methodologies in existing research that has been completed elsewhere are accurate. To understand these dynamics in Montgomery County specifically, these questions would be best studied through new research projects and new data sets developed to support these questions.

Consequently, the research project shifted to analyzing one of the most easily accessible databases, AHCMC's record of grantmaking. Drayton was able to organize and then analyze data from eighteen years (2002 through 2020) by importing the data into Tableau, a visualization tool. It is important to note that grantmaking approaches evolved during this time in response to many internal and external factors—two AHCMC strategic plans, AHCMC's adoption of a racial equity statement and practices, a recession, the COVID pandemic and protests related to race, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Key Observations

- Arts and cultural organizations, as well as artists, often operate within a regional context. Some of AHCMC's grantees reflect this regional reality; presenting work and collaborating with individuals and organizations outside Montgomery County to both bring new work into the County and showcase local work from Montgomery County to greater regional audiences.
- Since 2003, AHCMC has expanded its service footprint, providing grants to organizations in an increasing number of County areas.[18] For example, organizations in north central county only began applying for and receiving grant support in 2015.
- During the same time period, the amount of grant funding for arts organizations in core areas has increased. For example, arts organizations in Rockville received $155,000 in 2003. Since then, arts organizations in this zip code have received more than $23.5 million in grants.
- Most organizations funded by the Arts Council over the past 20 years fall within a budget range of $50,000 to $250,000; with grant awards averaged between $10,000 and $50,000 and a typical the median grant award of was approximately $12,000. Historically, organization grants have ranged from around $1000 to over $700,000. Such a low median compared to the maximum grant size and average budget range highlights some of the challenges presented to maintain equity between larger and smaller organizations. In FY21, AHCMC's Board approved a grants policy change, enacting a maximum grant award of $600,000 regardless of an organization's budget size, to center equitable grantmaking. AHCMC no longer provides awards over $600,000 to ensure funding for smaller, less capitalized organizations.

[18] These observations were made by analyzing the number and amount of grants awarded by Zip Code.

- Funding is divided between general operating support, project/program grants and special initiatives. In recent years, the Arts Council has steadily increased its levels of general operating support to support increased trust and allow greater flexibility in spending and investment for grantees.

5. Implications for Montgomery County's Cultural Plan

These research studies indicate that understanding how arts, culture and creativity enters into the lived experience of County residents — grounded in the perspective of the community itself — can provide a strong foundation for a future County arts and culture plan. This would complement the focus that cultural plans typically have on established arts organizations, venues and practicing artists and their operating, capital and creative needs.[19] These are some of the key considerations for a future plan:

- Explore new paradigms for expressing the purpose and understanding the impact of public arts and culture support as related to cultural and community resiliency and personal growth. This should serve as one of the foundational pillars of the County's arts and culture strategies, just as concepts of "economic development" and "vibrancy" have in the past.[20]
- Consider the diverse ways that people engage with arts and culture in their everyday lives, in addition to their interaction with more formal and traditional arts organizations and venues. In one sense, this mirrors the distinction between "arts" and "culture" that MJR's report flagged. These interactions were characterized most clearly in Civic Arts research as **"Creative Expression," "Collective Creative Making," "Community Events and Gatherings,"** and **"Connecting with 'Other,' Together."**
- Consider community actors as critical partners in the creation and implementation of studies and data collection efforts on the ground.
- Consider how a wide range of County resources and policies — beyond AHCMC grantmaking — create a network of support for the cultural life of its residents. This includes not only direct funding, access to public facilities and service delivery, but also the way that private and shared spaces could be used to further cultural life and the County policies that impact that use.
- Recognize the challenges to effective, broad-based community engagement. Planning fatigue, changed attitudes towards gathering because of the pandemic, desire not to be seen by public agencies, lack of understanding of how participation can lead to change, and distrust in planning processes are among the barriers that AHCMC's consultants experienced in these research projects. For a cultural plan, there is also the potential that for many communities in Montgomery County a "cultural plan" is a culturally-specific endeavor that has little relevance to them.

[19] According to Civic Arts, few cultural agencies ask, "What are we missing when we only identify cultural assets by standard categories?" For the most part, this question has been explored through academic work, albeit on a smaller scale, and usually with an eye toward providing a basis for re-evaluating policy objectives and priorities. (Email correspondence with Civic Arts' Lynn Osgood, September 8, 2023).

[20] MJR Partners' report observes, anecdotally, that community cultural organizations supported the resiliency of their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic: "Likewise, community-based cultural organizations mounted responses to address basic needs such as food and clothing, as well as outlets that supported the mental trauma of isolation."

[22] As noted by Mario Rosario Jackson et. al., "The production, dissemination, and validation of arts and culture at the neighborhood level are made possible through the contributions of many different kinds of stakeholders — both arts and non- arts entities. The networks of relationships among these entities constitute a system of support that is critical to a community's cultural vitality." Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ph.D. Joaquín Herranz, Jr. Florence Kabwasa-Green, *Art and Culture in Communities | A Framework for Measurement* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2003)

Appendix 1: Arts and Culture Funding Snapshot | View and Download HERE

Arts and Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in Montgomery County, Md. (Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts: 2023)

Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2017–2022 (Silver Spring: Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, 2016)

Public Art Guidelines (Silver Spring: Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, 2023)

William Brooks, "Examining the Evaluation of Montgomery County's Arts and Entertainment Districts," unpublished research study prepared as 2022 Montgomery County Summer Fellow (August 2022)

Leslie Rubin, "Strathmore and the Arts in Montgomery County, OLO Report 2019–12" (Rockville: Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight, 2019)

Victor Gotesman, *Montgomery County, Md. — Wheaton Arts and Cultural Facilities Feasibility Study* (September, 2018)

Takenya LaViscount, "FY21 Grant Guidelines Revamp Overview and Timeline" memo to AHCMC Grants Committee, October 1, 2019

Appendix 2: Bibliography | View and Download HERE

Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan (City of Oakland, 2018).

Tom Borrup, "40 Years Young: The Evolving Practice of Cultural Planning," in *Artsblog* (Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, November 8, 2018).

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010).

Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ph.D. Joaquín Herranz, Jr. Florence Kabwasa-Green, *Art and Culture in Communities | A Framework for Measurement* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2003

Thrive 2050, Montgomery County Md. General Plan Update (Silver Spring, Md.: Maryland-National Capital Planning Commission, 2023).

Appendix 3: Creative Placemaking Theory of Change

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010).

Published by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, MD
https://www.creativemoco.com
801 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910

© 2024 Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

Montgomery County CULTURAL PLAN

Create. Inspire. Connect. Belong.

arts & humanities
council of montgomery county

Advisors Share Out Meeting
January 29, 2025

metris arts consulting℠

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus

Project Director

Maame Amoyaw

Community Engagement Coordinator

Introduction

Agenda

01 What we have done so far

02 Guiding questions

03 Research and engagement methods

04 How you can help with next steps

01 What We Have Done So Far

Photo by Fungai Tichawangana (2015) from Metris' How Creative Spaces Foster Civic Engagement

01 What We Have Done So Far

- [x] DESIGN
- [ ] DISCOVER
- [ ] ENVISION
- [ ] CONFIRM
- [ ] CELEBRATE

Photo: Cultural Plan Kickoff (October, 2024) by Sed Gary

01

Photo by Ashley Alvarez (2024) from Advisor Workshops

- Completed initial research
- Queried councilmembers
- Conducted advisor workshops

- Identified cultural plan stakeholders
- Equity frame stakeholder mapping
- High Interest/Low Influence stakeholders = Critical

01

Photo by Ashley Alvarez (2024) from Advisor Workshops

The most frequently cited groups[1] in this category include:

- Artists and performers
- Distinct ethnic, affinity, and culturally specific groups
  - Ethiopian community*
  - El Salvadoran community*
  - LGBTQIA+ artists and community*
  - Disability communities*
  - Francophone Black diaspora
  - Hispanic/Latinx/Latin American community
  - Asian community/leaders
  - Black, Asian, and Latinx artists
  - Black and brown youth
- Geographic/regional communities
- Libraries
- Older adults
- Students and youth

[1] Groups noted with an asterisk were named the most frequently. Artists and youth appeared both within distinct ethnic, affinity, and culturally specific groups, in addition to being named without those identifiers. While advisors named "Asian community leaders," we know that residents of Asian descent do not represent a monolith. We believe this category of stakeholders merits further refinement, as Montgomery County has significant communities of immigrants from India, the Middle East, and East Asia (particularly China and South Korea).

02 Guiding Questions

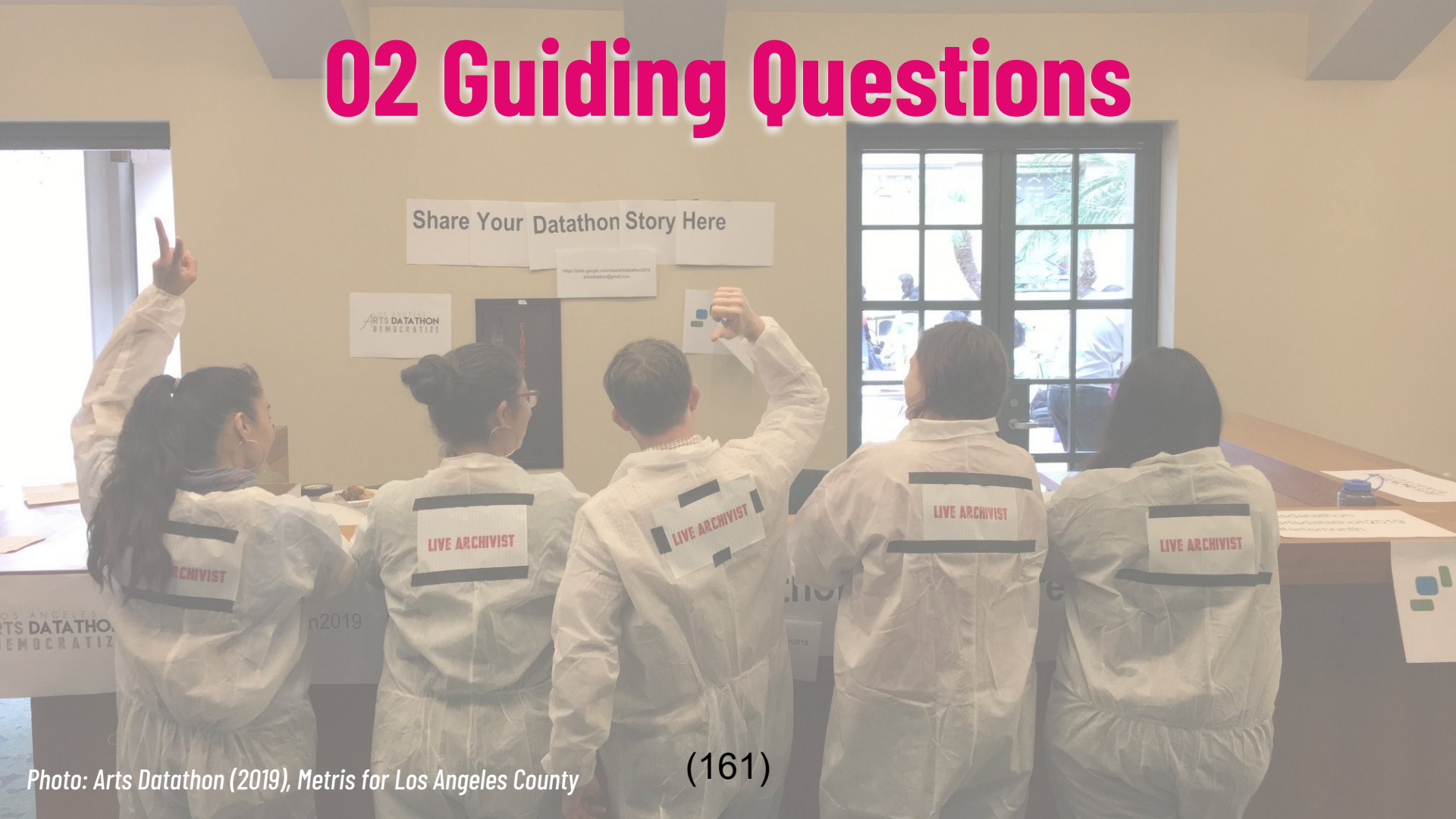


Photo: Arts Datathon (2019), Metris for Los Angeles County

02 Guiding Questions

"How can Montgomery County help its residents lead culturally rich lives and best support community-backed priorities through arts, culture, and the humanities?"

Community-backed values and priorities:

Belonging, Intersectionality, Cultural Sector Resiliency

Belonging:

How can arts, culture, and humanities investments and policies:

- Respond to Montgomery County's rapid and diverse population growth
- Expand access to arts and culture resources for all residents
- Advance racial equity

Intersectionality:

How can arts, culture, and the humanities intersect with the work of the government and local NGOs in innovative ways to add value to the County's efforts in areas such as:

- Housing
- Economic development
- Well-being/health
- Education
- Community building
- Environmental stewardship

Cultural Sector Resiliency:

How can the County's arts and culture investments and policies best support the arts, culture, and humanities sector to:

- Strengthen capacity
- Address structural gaps
- Effectively respond to continued impacts of the pandemic and economic and political instability

02

1. Establish cultural policies for Montgomery County for the next ten years that cohesively advance these community-backed priorities for arts, culture, and humanities

2. Provide specific, actionable steps for AHCMC, County Council, M-NCPPC, and arts, culture, and humanities organizations

3. Align the County's resources across all its agencies
    - Funding
    - Facilities and land
    - Programming, educational activities, and catalytic projects
    - Management of community planning and land development

03 Methods

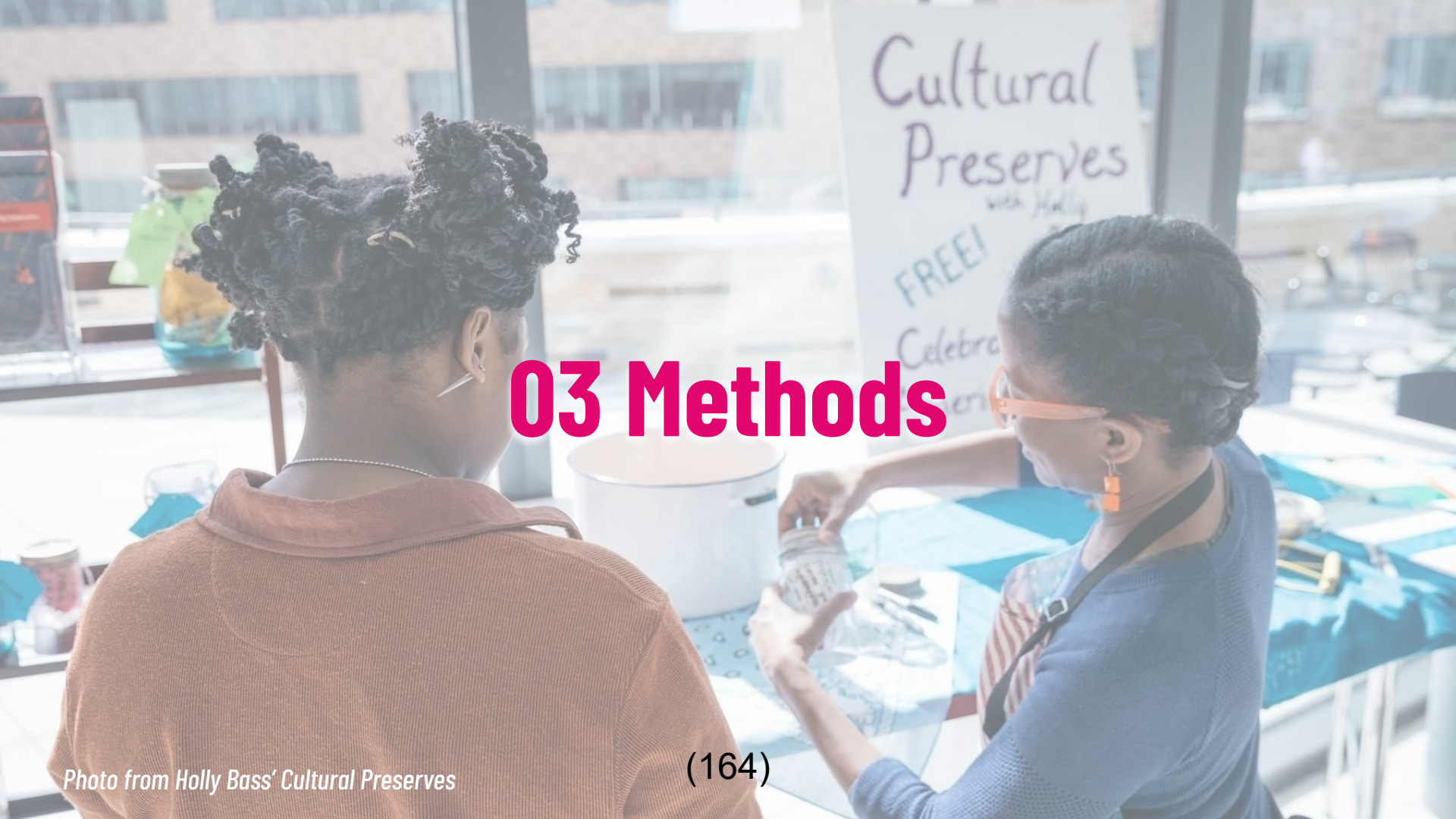


Photo from Holly Bass' Cultural Preserves

03

Present to boards and classes

- Video record the presentation, pair with embedded poll, link to further engagement opportunities

- In-person and/or live virtual to:
  - Urban partnership boards (3)
  - Arts and entertainment district boards (3)
  - Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
  - Montgomery County Appropriations Committee (3/27)
  - Visit Montgomery/MCEDC
  - MNCPPC board (1)
  - Montgomery College board
  - MCPS board
  - High school arts/civic classes in geographically remote areas (3)

- Via recorded video with in-person presence by AHCMC staff:
  - Regional Service Center Citizen Advisory Boards (5)
  - A selection of Montgomery County's 90 boards and commissions, prioritizing groups that most align with High Interest stakeholders and/or advance intersectional opportunities
  - Boards for AHCMC grantees and community organizations

→ Advisor/councilmember support opportunity: Help connecting with above boards

03

Cultural Preserves

- Signature creative community engagement project developed by team member artist Holly Bass
- Reach diverse segments of Montgomery County residents through whimsical artistic pop-up

Photo from Holly Bass' Cultural Preserves

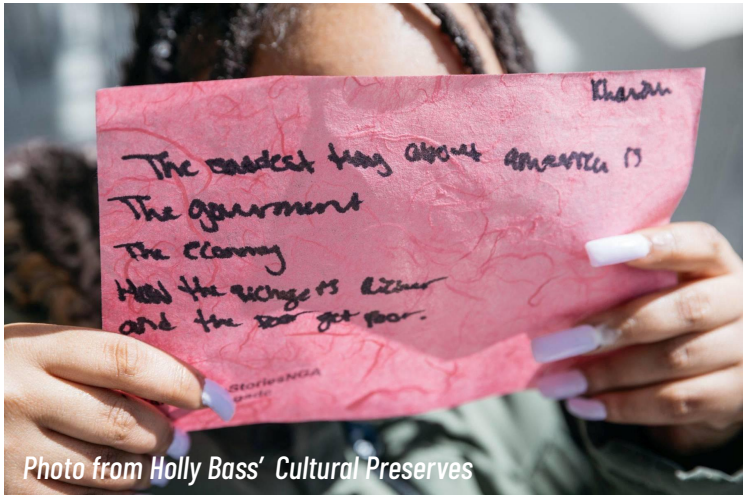


Photo from Holly Bass' Cultural Preserves

→ Advisor/councilmember support opportunity: Suggestions of events to dovetail with, prioritizing events that attract priority High Interest/Low Influence stakeholder groups (166)

03

Interviews

- County agency representatives (7) and other High Influence stakeholders (5)
- Identify new opportunities for intersectional work

- Interviews with:
  - General services (DGS)
  - Parks/planning and recreation
  - Transportation and environment
  - Health/human services and housing/community affairs
  - Montgomery College and MCPS
  - Grants office
  - MCEDC and economic development committee

→ Advisor support opportunity: Be interviewed, if you represent one of these agencies

03

Focus Groups

- Individual artists/culture bearers
- Arts educators
- Small and culturally specific/BIPOC-serving organizations
- Mid-sized organizations
- Large organizations
- Creative-sectors businesses

Photo: Cultural Plan Kickoff (October, 2024) by Sed Gary

Youth Town Hall

- Youth Town Hall (In partnership with Councilmember Fani-González's office)
- Host in District 6, additionally promote to afterschool nonprofits and MCPS youth beyond
- Hold on an in-service day when there is no school (Proposed: March 31st, 2025)
- Offer youth community service hours for attendance
- Engage a graphic recorder
- Explore engaging youth documentarians and social media influencers

Photo by Fungai Tichawangana (2015) from Metris' How Creative Spaces Foster Civic Engagement

→ Advisor/councilmember support opportunity: Connect us to youth documentarians. Promote on social media

03

Meeting-in-a-box

- Enable stakeholders to lead their own mini community meeting
- 16 targeted (Low Influence/High Interest stakeholder groups), plus 4 "on demand"
- Distinct ethnic, affinity, and culturally specific groups:
  - Ethiopian community*
  - El Salvadoran community*
  - LGBTQIA+ artists and community*
  - Disability communities*
  - Francophone Black diaspora
  - Hispanic/Latinx/Latin American community (beyond El Salvadorian)
  - East Asian community/leaders (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino)
  - Southeast Asian community/leaders (Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sir Lankan)
  - Black, Asian, and Latinx artists
  - Older adults
- Libraries
- Geographic/regional communities: One for each regional service center area (5)

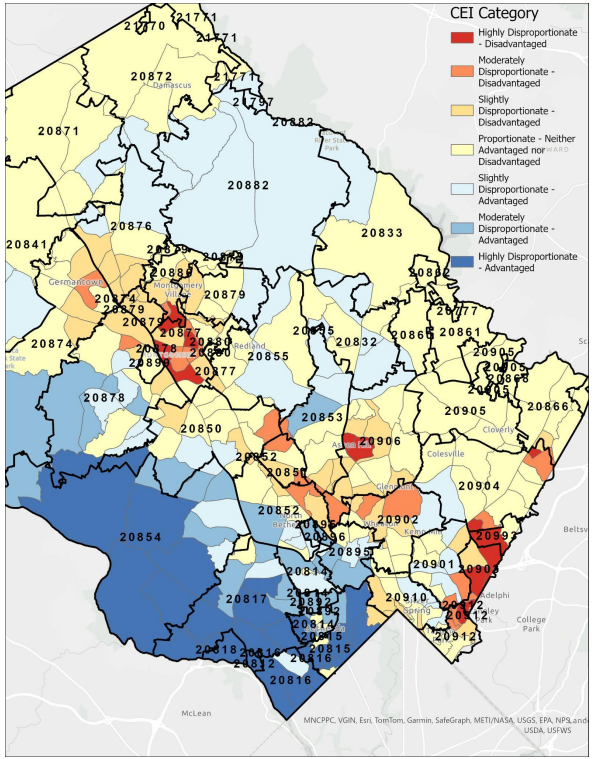
→ Advisor support opportunity: Host a meeting-in-a-box. Help us identify/recruit additional hosts

03

Survey

- Online survey to broadly capture diverse residents' perspectives

- To increase inclusive participation:
  - Keep language accessible
  - Translate the survey
  - Incentivize participation
  - Email mailing lists & social media promotion
  - Ask "link" people to send out via WhatsApp to target communities, etc.
  - Postcard mailing (multiple languages) to target residents of the racial groups identified as priority High Interest/Low Influence stakeholders
  - High-value and strategic advertising and media promotion



→ Advisor/councilmember support opportunity: Promote survey via email mailing lists and/or on social media

03

Future phases

- July 2025: ⟶ ENVISION phase
  - Synthesis of findings from all methods
  - In-person workshops to craft specific policy recommendations
  - 1st draft of the plan

- October 2025: ⟶ CONFIRM phase
  - Advisors workshop(s)
  - Draft 2 of plan
  - Public review & finalize plan

- February 2026 ⟶ CELEBRATE phase
  - Community celebration
  - Present final plan to for approval

⟶ Advisor support opportunities!

Photo by Ashley Alvarez (2024) from Advisor Workshops

04 Next Steps

Photo by Ashley Alvarez (2024) from Advisor Workshops

04 How You Can Help With Next Steps

Support from Advisors/Councilmembers Recap

- **DISCOVER Phase**
  - Suggestions of events to dovetail with Cultural Preserves (ASAP)
  - Connect us to boards/classes for presentations (ASAP)
  - Participate in an interview (ASAP)
  - Host meeting-in-a-box
  - Suggest focus group participants
  - Promote survey via email & social media

- **ENVISION Phase**
  - Strategy sessions

- **CONFIRM Phase**
  - Advisors workshops

- **CELEBRATE Phase**
  - Champion the plan

Photos: Cultural Plan Kickoff (October, 2024) by Sed Gary

THANK YOU!

Montgomery County
CULTURAL
PLAN
Create. Inspire.
Connect. Belong.

Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County
Joe Frandoni
Joe.Frandoni@creativemoco.com

Metris Arts Consulting
Anne Gadwa Nicodemus
gadwa@metrisarts.com

Maame (May) Amoyaw
amoyaw@metrisarts.com

arts & humanities
council of montgomery county

metris arts consulting℠